

1 **Introduction**

2 This Chapter provides the foundation for the
3 Comprehensive Plan, outlining why and how it was
4 developed.

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Why Develop a Comprehensive Plan?

It is difficult to know what the future may bring for Story County, or for any county. As residents and businesses come and go, and economic trends rise and fall, changes will occur. The purpose of the Cornerstone to Capstone (C2C) Comprehensive Plan is to establish a shared vision for Story County to guide future actions and decisions. This guidance provides predictability and consistency over time, which encourages investment. We plan so that we can act and react in a changing world with a confident understanding of our common values and goals.

Initiating the C2C Planning Process

The C2C Plan was launched after it was decided there was a need for a truly comprehensive plan. The need was documented by the American Planning Association during a Planning Assistance Team visit and further developed through an internal Comprehensive Plan Audit. A Project Team was established to help guide the planning process and develop the C2C Plan.

C2C Plan Maintenance

This planning document is a “living” guide for growth and change in Story County. The C2C Plan represents the County’s best effort to address current issues and anticipate future needs; however, it can and should be amended from time to time if conditions warrant reconsideration of strategies in the C2C Plan. If decisions are being made that are not consistent with the C2C Plan, then the Plan has lost its relevance and should be amended. The process of amending the C2C Plan should not be onerous, but it should trigger a brief pause to consider again the long term vision for the county. This C2C Plan’s value is dependent upon frequent use and occasional updates. The C2C Plan’s Implementation Matrix will be adopted in the Fall 2016.

Iowa Smart Planning

The Iowa Smart Planning Act (*State Code Chapter 18B*), signed into law on April 26, 2010, includes three primary components:

1. Ten Iowa Smart Planning Principles;
2. Comprehensive Planning Guidance and 13 plan elements; and
3. Establishment of the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force.

The development of the C2C Plan, as well as its ongoing maintenance, considers these elements and incorporates, as applicable, the Ten Smart Planning principles of the Iowa Smart Planning Act.

The Iowa Smart Planning Act dictates the *Ten Iowa Smart Planning Principles* must be considered and may be applied when local governments and state agencies deliberate all appropriate planning, zoning, development and resource management decisions.

The Ten Smart Planning Principles

1. Collaboration
2. Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency
3. Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy
4. Occupational Diversity
5. Revitalization
6. Housing Diversity
7. Community Character
8. Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection
9. Sustainable Design
10. Transportation Diversity

Comprehensive Planning Guidance

The Iowa Smart Planning Act outlines 13 elements that may be included in a city or county’s comprehensive plan.

1. Public Participation
2. Issues and Opportunities
3. Land Use
4. Housing
5. Public Infrastructure and Utilities
6. Transportation
7. Economic Development
8. Agriculture and Natural Resources
9. Community Facilities
10. Community Character
11. Hazards
12. Intergovernmental Collaboration
13. Implementation



Plan Organization

The organization of the C2C Plan is based both on the planning process and the guidance provided by the Iowa Smart Planning Act. The C2C Plan is divided into seven chapters plus several important appendices, as described below:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 discusses the role of this Plan, the planning process, the planning area, and key community indicators.

Chapter 2: Public Input

Chapter 2 describes the public participation methods and feedback.

Chapter 3: The Foundation

Chapter 3 defines a vision for the future of Story County, and the general guiding goals, objectives and strategies for elements of the Plan, including:

- » *Agricultural Resources*
- » *Community Facilities*
- » *Housing*
- » *Emergency Preparedness*
- » *Communications and Public Safety*
- » *Infrastructure and Utilities*
- » *Intergovernmental Coordination*
- » *Cultural Resources*

Chapter 4: Conservation of Natural Resources and Recreation

Chapter 4 establishes the goals, objectives and strategies for preserving, protecting, and restoring our natural resources and recreation.

Chapter 5: Land Use Plan

Chapter 5 establishes the goals, objectives and strategies pertaining to land use decisions, describes current land use characteristics, defines future land use categories (and strategies), and presents the future land use map.

Chapter 6: Economic Prosperity

Chapter 6 establishes the goals, objectives and strategies pertaining to economic development decisions.

Chapter 7: Transportation

Chapter 7 establishes the goals, objectives and strategies pertaining to transportation planning and improvements.

Appendix A: Community Indicators

Appendix A is a compilation of data that describes the existing conditions, trends, and projections for Story County. This data informs the planning process and should be updated from time to time to track progress and change in Story County.

Appendix B: Survey Results

Appendix B includes the complete results from the public surveys conducted as a part of this planning process.

Appendix C: Municipal and Surrounding County Comprehensive Plan Summaries

Appendix C provides a condensed summary of the comprehensive plans and future land use plans for those communities within the county that previously adopted a comprehensive plan.

Appendix D: Plan Area Maps

Appendix E: Strategic Plan

Appendix F: Countywide Watershed Assessments

Planning Process

The Cornerstone to Capstone (C2C) Plan is all about looking forward to 2036. Story County has built a solid foundation - the Cornerstone - with planning dating back to the 1950s. This planning process designs our blueprint - the Capstone - for how we grow and develop over the coming 20 years. The C2C Plan is a coordinated long range plan that is intended to be physical and policy-based.

A transparent public participation process is the foundation to a successful plan. The involvement of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders is essential to the creation and implementation of the plan.

This Plan was discussed and developed through a series of working session meetings between March 2015 to March 2016 (*see side bar for the project milestones*). All meetings were public meetings and noticed as such. Meetings were advertised via public flyers, Story County and city websites and through social media.



Project Milestones

C2C Project Team Meetings
(meeting twice a month)

March 2015 - March 2016

C2C Citizen Task Force Meeting #1

April 2015

Planning & Zoning Commission Workshop

May 2015

Community Input Meetings

June 18 - June 30, 2015 (five locations)

C2C Citizen Task Force Meeting #2

June 2015

C2C Citizen Task Force Meeting #3

July 2015

C2C Citizen Task Force Meeting #4 and
Partial Draft Presentations to P&Z and Board
of Supervisors

August 2015

C2C Citizen Task Force Meeting #5

September 2015

C2C Citizen Task Force Meeting #6

October 2015

Draft Presentations to P&Z and Board of
Supervisors

December 2015

Plan Review Open Houses

*January - February 2016 (five locations and an
online open house)*

C2C Citizen Task Force Meeting #7

February 2016

Planning & Zoning Commission Workshop

April 2016

Planning & Zoning Commission
Recommendation

May 2016

County Board Workshop

May 2016

County Board Adoption

June 2016

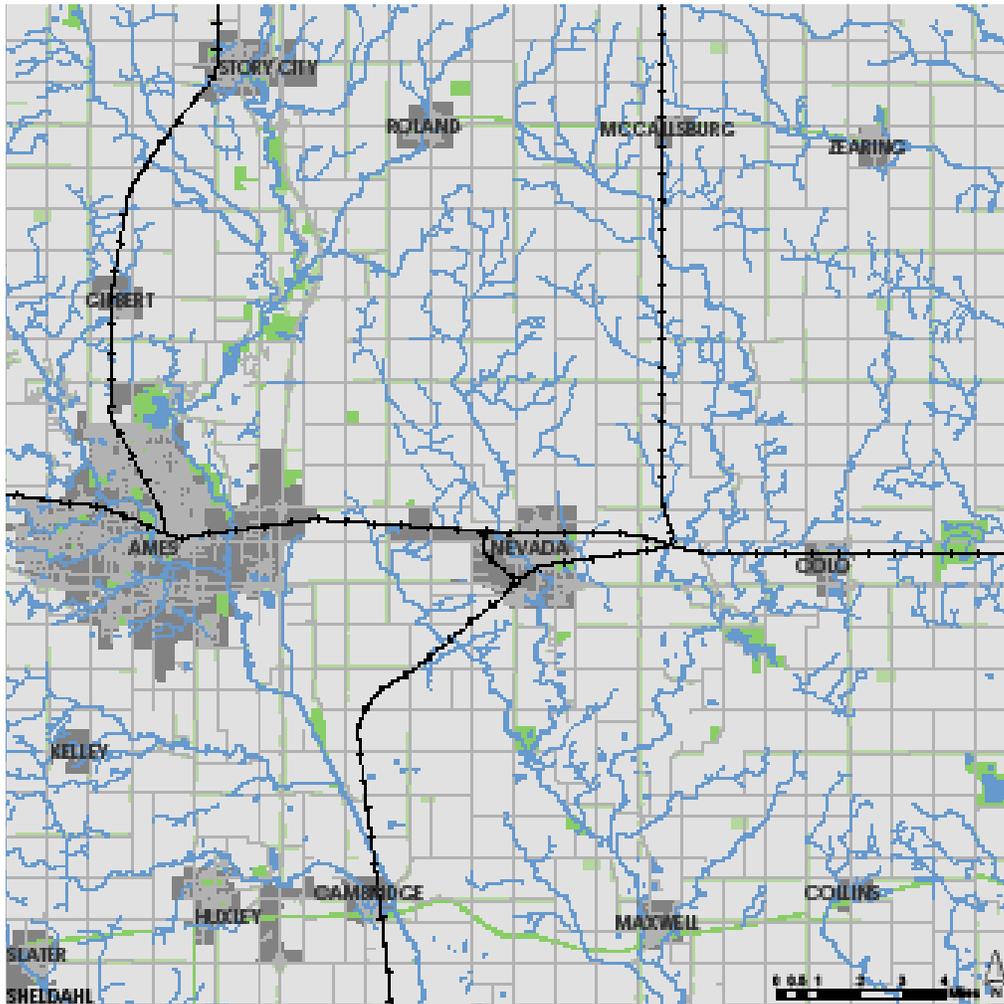
Planning Area

The study area for this Plan includes all lands in which the County has both a short and long-term interest in planning and development activity; therefore, the Planning Area includes all unincorporated lands within the County (see Figure 1.2 below). In total, the County covers approximately 367,360 acres (576 square miles).

Key Community Indicators

The subsequent pages analyze the overarching population and demographic trends for Story County. Examination of these trends provides a foundation for the planning process and implementation of the C2C Plan. See *Appendix A* for a full report on the Story County's Community Indicators.

Figure 1.2: Planning Area Map



- Legend**
- Rivers and Streams
 - Public Parks and Open Space
 - Roads
 - City Boundaries
 - Railroad

This map provides essential base information about the location of rivers and streams, public parks and open space, roads, and incorporated cities. In order to successfully implement the plan, it is essential to first understand and analyze the current relationships and opportunities for improvement.



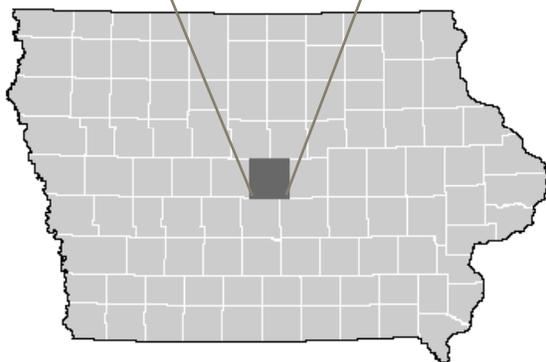
Map Data Sources:
 Story County GIS Department
 Iowa Department of Natural Resources GIS Library (IDNGL)



Population

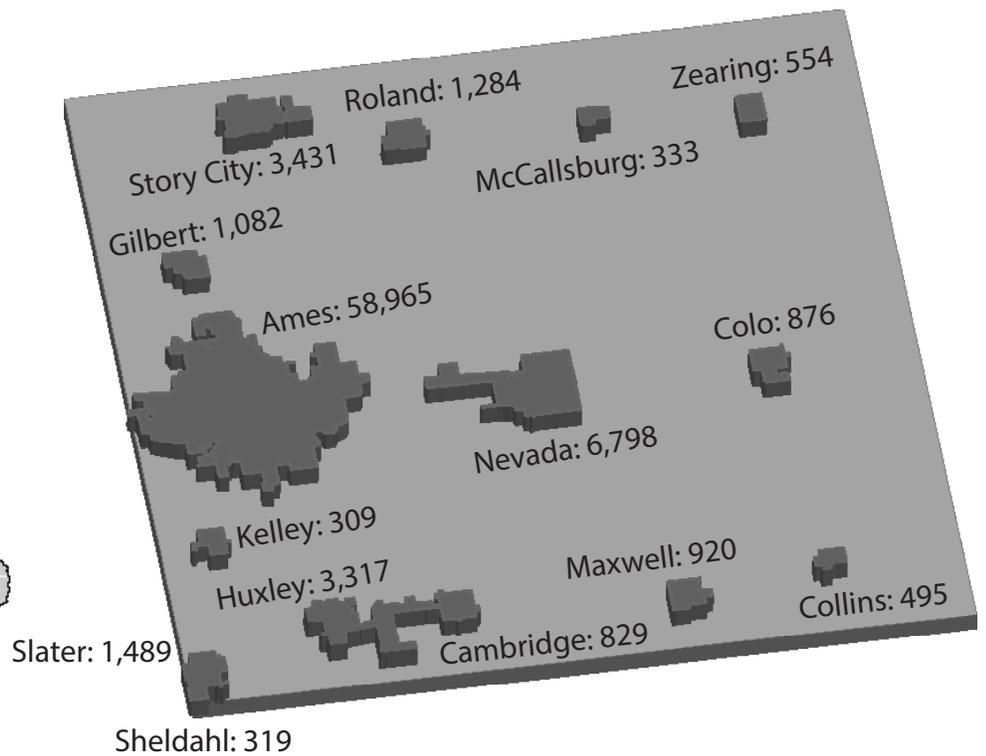
89,542 residents in 2010

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Unincorporated Areas | 10% |
| Ames | 66% |
| Cambridge | 1% |
| Collins | 1% |
| Colo | 1% |
| Gilbert | 1% |
| Huxley | 4% |
| Kelley | < 1% |
| Maxwell | 1% |
| McCallsburg | < 1% |
| Nevada | 8% |
| Roland | 1% |
| Sheldahl | < 1% |
| Slater | 2% |
| Story City | 4% |
| Zearing | 1% |

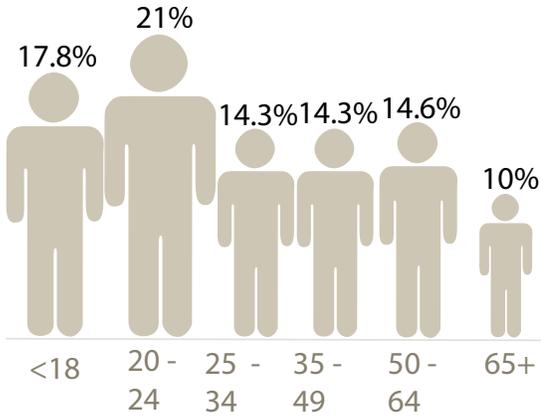


Population Breakdown
By Municipality

There are fifteen municipalities within Story County, with the majority of the county's population in the City of Ames. This area is home to Iowa State University (ISU) which had a record enrollment of 36,001 students in September 2015. The population of Ames' permanent residents, which includes many ISU students, makes up roughly 66% of the county's population. About 10% of the county's population is in the unincorporated areas with the remaining 24% in the other 14 municipalities.

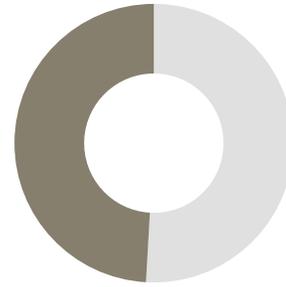


Page data source: US Census Bureau 2010 Census



Age

In 2010, the median age in the county was 26.7, which is lower than the state's median age of 36.6. Notably, the county has a significantly lower ratio of persons over the age of 50 as compared to the state (24.6%, compared to 34.5% statewide).



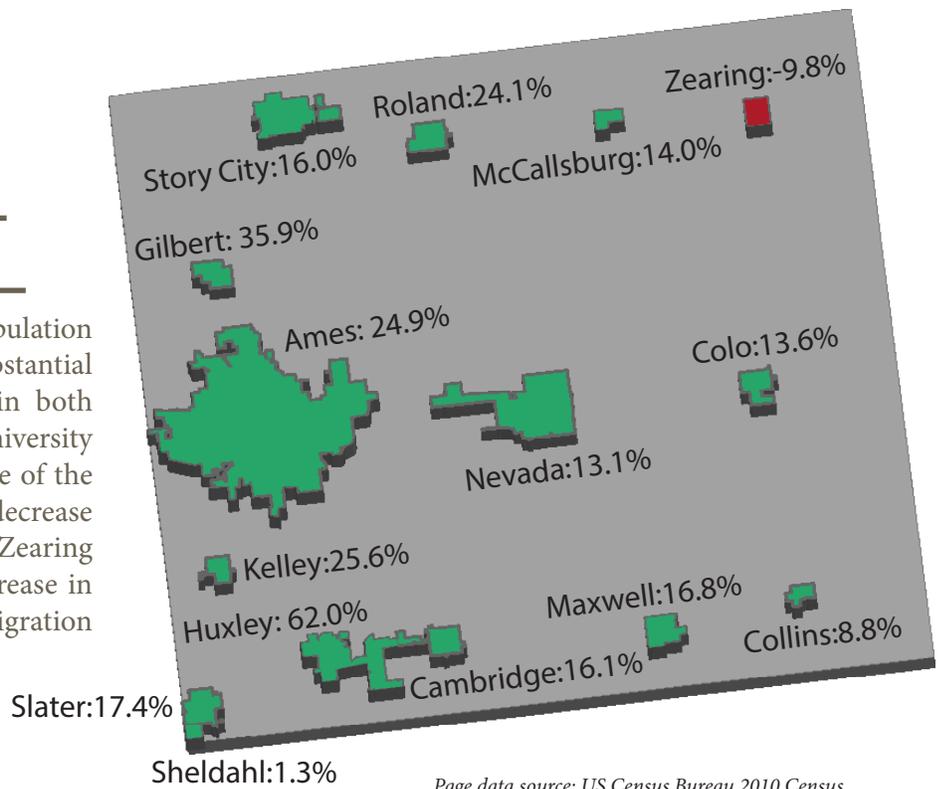
♀ 51.8%
♂ 48.2%

Gender

According to the US Census Bureau's 2010 Census, the breakdown between female and male residents in the county is in line with the state's percentages (49.5% male and 50.5% female for the state of Iowa).

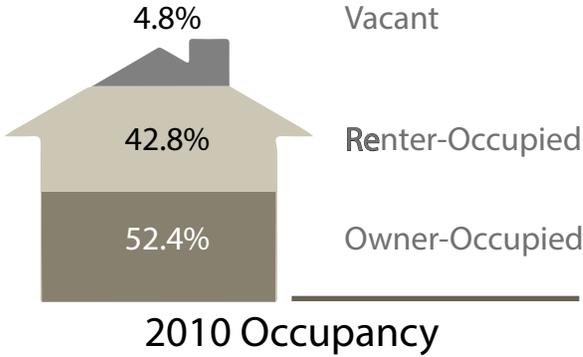
20 Year Population Change

From 1990 to 2010, Story County's population increased by 23.8%. Much of this substantial growth can be attributed to increases in both students and staff at Iowa State University (ISU). During this same period, only one of the municipalities within the county saw a decrease in population, which was the City of Zearing (-9.8%). In general there was also a decrease in unincorporated population (-2.3%) or a migration out of the rural county.



Page data source: US Census Bureau 2010 Census

Housing



Average Median Value

The county's median home value increased 43% from 2000 to 2015. Median value of \$115,800 to estimates of \$165,800, which is significantly higher than the state's median value of \$134,700.

2018
Avg. Median Value
\$181,600
(Story County - exc. Ames)

The majority of county residents live in owner-occupied housing. However, owner occupancy percentages have declined from 1990 to 2010 possibly due in part to the increase in multi-family housing units, higher home values and the student population in Ames.



1980-2010 Household Counts

From 1980-2010, Story County showed a 48.7% increase in the number of households. This includes slow growth in households from the 1980s to the 1990s (6.7%) or less than 1% per year. During the same period, the state as whole increased by 10.9% or averaging just over 1% growth per year.

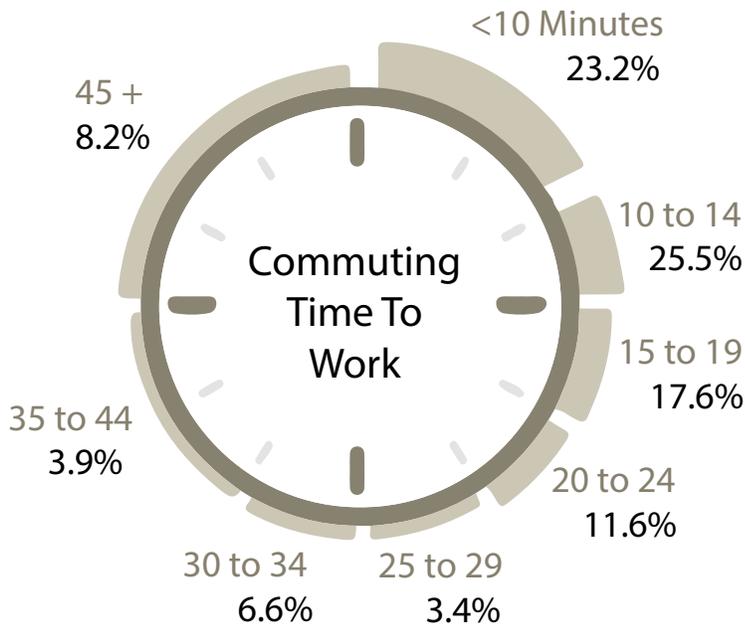
The county's "persons per household" count, also known as household size, dropped from 2.39 in 2000 to 2.34 in 2010, which is a reduction of 2.1%. During this same period, the state's "persons per household" declined by 2.5% to 2.40. This trend is consistent with national trends over the past several decades and can be attributed to smaller family sizes, increases in life expectancy, and increases in single parent households.

To be conservative in the projection of future housing demand, this analysis assumes a continued decline in household size of 1% per decade to forecast total households for years 2015, 2020, 2025 and 2030. As projected by the US Census, the county will see an increase of approximately 12,680 households between 2010 to 2030. This equates to an addition of approximately 13,254 housing units over the coming 20 years, an increase of 36%. The breakdown of which means an average of 660 housing units per year, or approximately 346 single-family dwellings and 314 multi-family dwellings per year for the next twenty years. The projected need of an average of 660 housing units per year is above the average housing starts per year recorded over the past 30 years in Story County.

Page data source: US Census Bureau ACS Estimates



Transportation



Commuting Time to Work (2009-2013)

Approximately 48.7% of the county’s commuters age 16 or older work within 14 minutes of their place of employment. Most of the workers are employed within Story County.

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------|
| Single Occupancy | | 72.2% |
| Carpooled | | 8.9% |
| Walked | | 7.4% |
| Public Transportation | | 5.9% |
| Worked at Home | | 2.9% |
| Bicycle | | 1.9% |
| Other Means | | 0.8% |

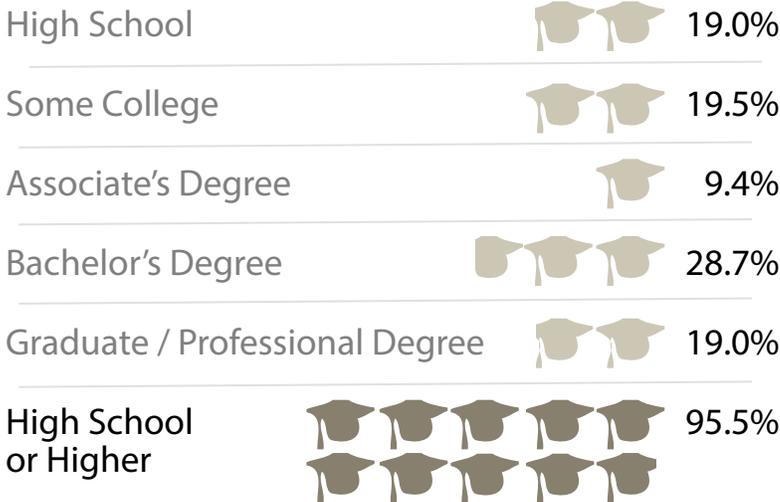
Commuting Method to Work (2009-2013)

Commuting in Story County is mostly done by car and primarily in a single occupant vehicle (72.2%). This number is much lower than the state as whole, which is at 89.2%. Those who carpoled to work is slightly higher in Story County at 8.9%, as compared to 8.8% for the state. Workers who used public transit was substantially higher in the Story County as compared to the state as whole (5.9% to 1.1%, respectively). Those that biked and walked to work is substantially higher in the county compared to the state as well. The remainder of the means of travel were quite similar between Story County and the state as a whole.

Page data source: US Census Bureau ACS Estimates

⌘ Economic Prosperity

Educational Attainment (2009-2013)



Educational attainment data can provide insight into the quality of the existing labor force, including the availability of skilled and professional workers and the need for training opportunities. Data from the American Community Survey (2009-2013) shows that the percentage of county residents 25 years or older having at least a high school diploma was slightly higher than the state as a whole (95.5% vs 91.0%).

Those residents with bachelor's and graduate degrees, however, were substantially higher in the county than the state (47.7% vs 25.7%). The comparison of high school graduates to associate's degrees were substantially lower in the county versus the state (47.9% vs 65.2%).

Overall, Story County is very highly educated as compared to Iowa's average. This is due to the presence of Iowa State University in Story County and the fact that education is highly valued by county residents.

| | | Avg. 2009-2013 |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| Story County | Per Capita | \$25,986 |
| | Median Family | \$76,860 |
| | Median Household | \$50,516 |
| | Below Poverty | 6.2% |
| Iowa | Per Capita | \$27,027 |
| | Median Family | \$65,802 |
| | Median Household | \$51,843 |
| | Below Poverty | 8.1% |

Source: ACS, Census Bureau

US Census Definitions:

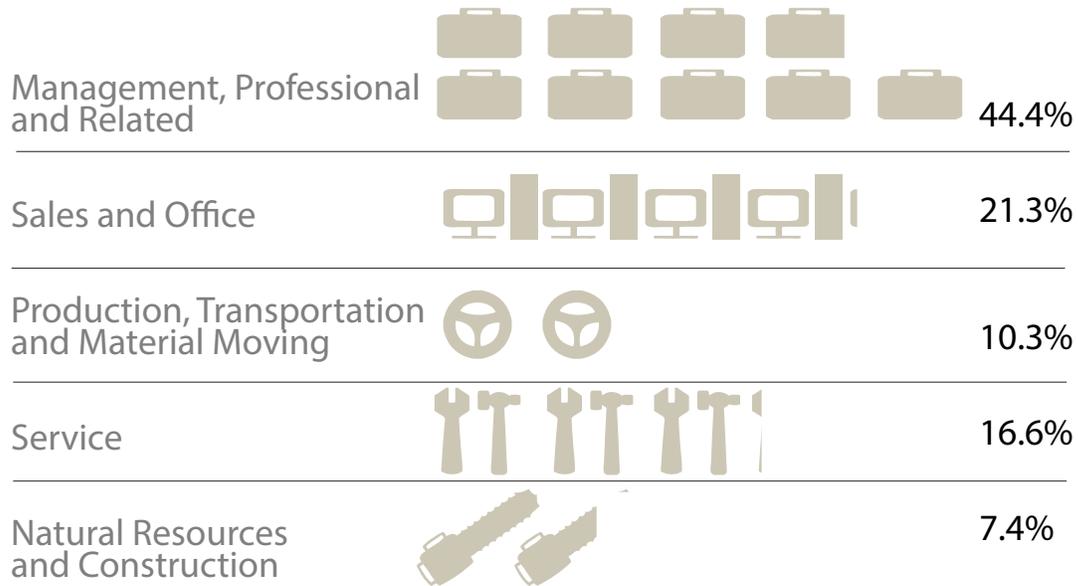
Median Family - A family consists of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing in the same housing unit.

Median Household - A household consists of all people who occupy a housing unit regardless of relationship. A household may consist of a person living alone or multiple unrelated individuals or families living together.

Income Indicators (2009-2013)

The above table reinforces the typical correlation between education and income. The median family income for the county is substantially higher than the state as a whole. However, the per capita and median household income is lower in the county than the state. Despite these lower incomes, the county has a lower rate of poverty than the state as a whole, reflecting the fact that people living below the federal poverty line tend to live in larger cities with more social services and transportation options.

Page data source: US Census Bureau ACS Estimates



Occupations (2007-2011)

Based on the American Community Survey (2007-2011), nearly 65.8% of workers in Story County earn a private wage and salary. This compares to 79.0% statewide. Residents in Story County as well as residents across the state, are primarily employed in “Management, Professional and Related” sectors, over 44% for Story County and 34% for the state.

Page data source: US Census Bureau ACS Estimates