

STRATEGIC PLAN

In Support of the Cornerstone to Capstone (C2C) Plan



STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

ADOPTED

October 30, 2018
Amended July 2020

October 2018

Story County Board of Supervisors
900 6th Street
Nevada, Iowa 50201

www.storycountyiowa.gov

STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

Our mission is...

Engaging our diverse communities to responsibly provide quality opportunities and services that matter.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction 1

Challenges 2

Values 3

Goals 4

Action Plan 5

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.



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STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction 1

Challenges 2

Values 3

Goals 4

Action Plan 5

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.



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STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction 1

Challenges 2

Values 3

Goals 4

Action Plan 5

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.



STRATEGIC PLAN

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction 1

Challenges 2

Values 3

Goals 4

Action Plan 5

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.



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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

Introduction 1

Challenges 2

Values 3

Goals 4

Action Plan 5

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 effectively and efficiently 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 of 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.



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STRATEGIC PLAN

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FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction 1

Challenges 2

Values 3

Goals 4

Action Plan 5

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.



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FISCAL YEARS 2019—2023

STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction 1

Challenges 2

Values 3

Goals 4

Action Plan 5

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.



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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	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
Additional Partners	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
Additional Partners	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	Continue involvement in the ASSET funding process to help determine human service gaps.	Board of Supervisors, Community Services	Medium
2	Update and expand broadband connectivity needs assessment throughout Story County and explore options for expansion of services.	Board of Supervisors, Planning and Development, Conservation	High
3	Continue offering technical assistance to smaller communities to support growth opportunities.	Board of Supervisors, Planning and Development	High
Additional Partners	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	Provide staff with training and tools to deliver the best services to Story County residents.	Board of Supervisors	Medium
Additional Partners	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	Develop and implement a plan to elevate Story County's Mission and Core Values.	All	High
Additional Partners	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
Additional Partners	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	Assess and develop opportunities to train staff to adapt to new situations and change.	Board of Supervisors	High
Additional Partners	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	Enhance ways to provide existing services efficiently and effectively.	All	High
Additional Partners	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	Enhance options for Story County residents and other customers to conduct business with the County through electronic means.	All	High
2	As a component of the annual Communications Plan, develop targeted media strategies.	Board of Supervisors	Medium
Additional Partners	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
Additional Partners	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	High
Additional Partners			

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
Additional Partners			

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.*

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
Additional Partners	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	Develop metrics to determine which roads get improved and which ones remain unpaved.	Secondary Roads, Planning and Development	High
Additional Partners	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	Develop a plan to address internal technology improvements and upgrades.	All	High
Additional Partners	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	Complete implementation of the StoryCom public safety communication system.	Sheriff, Board of Supervisors, Emergency Management Agency	High
Additional Partners	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
Additional Partners	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	Medium
Additional Partners	Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS); Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Prairie Rivers of Iowa.		

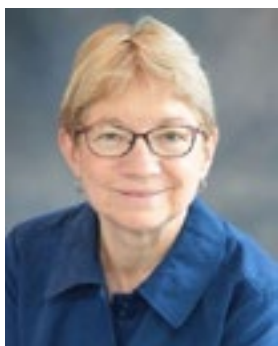
OBJECTIVE 2: *To review land use regulations to address conflicts and encourage the creation of new public and private services and businesses to benefit Story County's citizens.*

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	Medium
Additional Partners	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



Linda Murken



Lauris Olson



Lisa Heddens

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



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