



Boone

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Introduction

A comprehensive plan is a long-range document that collects and analyzes current conditions, states the county vision, and creates viable policy solutions to achieve the vision. The plan provides guidance on growth, development, and investment throughout Boone County. A long-range plan represents county resident, business operators and stakeholder aspirations for the future and provides the framework to get there. This plan replaces the County's previous plan, "Boone County, Iowa Comprehensive Development Plan Zoning and Subdivision Regulations" that was adopted in 2007. Since then, priorities have shifted and what once was the distant future, is now the present.

Recommendations for the comprehensive plan were crafted with the input of a steering committee, community meetings, an interactive map, focus groups, and additional public input for each of the policy goals. At these meetings we heard the need for affordable housing for all ages and incomes, the importance of keeping the rural community character, the need for expansion of infrastructure such as wireless and roadway improvements in appropriate locations and the desire of continued investment in local businesses. The comprehensive plan takes into consideration the comments and discussions to develop overarching themes. Within each theme, the comprehensive plan provides clear and workable recommendations directed from residents and a roadmap of how to get there.

The comprehensive plan provides the background of the current environment. It has information covering Boone County's population demographics, housing, economic development, hazards, public infrastructure, existing and future land use, and parks. The comprehensive plan includes an implementation matrix of goals, objectives and action items on a timeline that can be used to evaluate annual progress. As years go by, different pieces of the plan can, and should be, adjusted to fit the current needs of Boone County. We recommend a yearly review of the adopted goals and policy measures.

The comprehensive plan is not a standalone plan. It is to be used in conjunction with each individual town's plans in addition to other County plans. In future years, the plan should be used in unison when discussing budgeting, infrastructure upgrades, and public service adjustments. The comprehensive plan should be the framework referenced when decision makers craft regulatory controls, financial tools, and other programs. The Boone County Comprehensive Plan provides:

- The foundation for the future development patterns, subdivisions, and other land use regulations.
- Long-term and short-term County-wide goals and action steps to achieve those goals.
- Ensures all goals incorporate professional and technical considerations regarding the future of the County.

Background

Boone County is primarily a rural county within central Iowa including ten incorporated towns. The rolling hills of the Des Moines River Valley extend through the center of the county east to west. Story County and the City of Ames is located within Story County, just on the eastern edge of Boone County and is host to Iowa State University, a public research college with over 30,000 students yearly.¹ To the South in Dallas and Polk County is the Des Moines Metro, the largest City and metro in Iowa. Within Boone County, there are 10 incorporated towns with the County seat being Boone. The City of Boone has the largest population of the incorporated towns at 12,460 as of the 2020 census.

Boone County was first home to multiple Native American tribes. Historians differ on when the Sauk and Fox tribes were located in Boone County, but the earliest written accounts have settlers meeting them in 1734. By the time of the Treaty of 1825, Boone County was controlled by the Sauk and Fox tribes.² The Boone County Historical Society has compiled information of the history of Boone County. Below are excerpts from their compiled information.³



Figure 1.1 – Boone County Landscape

Source: Boone County

1 Iowa State Registrar, *Fall 2021 University Summary Report*, 1
2 N.E. Goldthwait, *History of Boone County Iowa*, 63
3 Boone County Historical Society, *Boone County History*, 1

“Before 1847, when Boone County was organized, its history was Iowa’s history. The first Europeans known to set foot in what later became Iowa were the French explorers Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette, who traveled down the Mississippi River in the summer of 1673 and visited Native American villages on the river’s western shore.

During the next 200 years, white settlers from the east and immigrants from Europe pushed into the Midwest, driving Native Americans westward. The US government encouraged the settling of western lands and tensions between various Native American tribes and white settlers increased as the government gained control over western territories. That control began with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, when Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory, of which Iowa was a part, from the French. Three years later, as a prelude to eventual settlement, Lewis and Clark explored the purchase lands, including what became the western boundary of Iowa.



Figure 1.2 – Boone, Iowa (Unknown Date)

Source: Boone County Historical Society

Subsequently, Iowa became part of other western territories. In 1812, when Louisiana became a state, the Missouri Territory was formed out of the Louisiana Territory. Although the Michigan Territory was organized in 1805, Iowa did not become a part of that territory until 1833. Three years later, Iowa became part of the Wisconsin Territory in advance of Michigan’s 1837 statehood. In 1838, the Iowa Territory was broken off from the Wisconsin Territory. Iowa became a state in 1846.

A critical conflict between government forces and Native Americans occurred in 1832 when Sauk leader Black Hawk attempted to retake the Illinois village of Saukenauk setting off the Black Hawk War. Three months later, Black Hawk and his warriors were defeated at the Bad Axe River in Wisconsin. Following the war, the Black Hawk Purchase of 1833 helped to open up Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa for settlement.

In the wake of the Black Hawk Purchase, Lt Col. Colonel Stephen W. Kearney lead three companies of the First Regiment of the United States Dragoons, up the Des Moines River from Old Fort Des Moines into southern Minnesota. Their mission was to assess the Indian situation in Iowa and to explore the land for future settlement. On June 23, 1835, Capt. Nathan Boone, youngest son of Daniel Boone and commander of Company H, camped near Mineral Ridge in what is now Boone County.

Twelve years later, Boone County was organized and named for Nathan Boone, but for more than two years after its founding in February of 1847, it remained a part of Polk County. By 1849 residents wanted their own county jurisdiction in which to vote, pay taxes, and do business. Under Iowa law, the county sheriff was responsible for ordering the election of county officers, but there was no Boone County Sheriff. Therefore, on May 8, 1849, William McKay, judge of the Fifth Judicial District, of which Boone County was a part, appointed Samuel B. McCall as County Sheriff. Before the election could occur, McCall had to divide the county into voting precincts, so he created Boone County’s first three townships—Boone, Boone River, and Pleasant Townships. The election of county officers from these townships was held on August 6, 1849. The newly elected commissioners then voted to confirm McCall’s townships.”

Iowa officially gained statehood in the United States in 1846. During the 19th century many towns were founded within Boone County with the primary reasons being access to a new railroad, limestone or coal mining operations opening, or being at the crossroads for agricultural products to be bought and sold.¹ During this time towns grew rapidly and often lost population just as quickly. During the 20th century towns started to gain consistency in growth and there was a reduction in the volatility of population. Currently there are 10 incorporated towns, Beaver, Berkley, Boone, Boxholm, Fraser, Luther, Madrid, Ogden, Pilot Mound, and Sheldahl.

1 *Boone County Historical Society, Boone County History, 1*