



REGION XII

CEDS 2022



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Region XII COG Strategy Committee



Name	Position	County Represented
Sam Kauffman	<i>ACED Board of Directors</i>	Audubon County
Cindy Paulsen	<i>ACED Board of Directors</i>	Audubon County
Pat Kaiser	<i>ACED Board of Directors</i>	Audubon County
Lyle Hansen	<i>ACED Board of Directors</i>	Audubon County
Jon Meislahn	<i>ACED Board of Directors</i>	Audubon County
Jason Hocker	<i>ACED Secretary</i>	Audubon County
Troy Wessel	<i>ACED President</i>	Audubon County
Sara Slater	<i>ACED, Business Coordinator</i>	Audubon County
Doug Sorensen	<i>ACED Board of Directors, County Supervisor</i>	Audubon County
Casey Berlau	<i>CADC Board Member</i>	Carroll County
Dave Quandt	<i>CADC Board Member</i>	Carroll County
Matt Meiners	<i>CADC, Economic Vitality Director</i>	Carroll County
Rich Ruggles	<i>CADC Board Member, County Supervisor</i>	Carroll County
Gene Meiners	<i>CADC Board Member, County Supervisor</i>	Carroll County
Mike Pogge-Weaver	<i>CADC Board Member</i>	Carroll County
John Steffes	<i>CADC Board Member</i>	Carroll County
Jim Auen	<i>CADC Board Member</i>	Carroll County
Kim Tiefenthaler	<i>CADC Board Member</i>	Carroll County
Tim Gute	<i>Carroll Chamber President</i>	Carroll County
Katie Mason	<i>CADC Board Member</i>	Carroll County
Joel Lundstrom	<i>CADC Board Member</i>	Carroll County
Doug Dorhout	<i>CDC Board, Professional Computer Solutions</i>	Crawford County
Amy Healy	<i>CDC Board, Wise Monkey Quilting</i>	Crawford County
Erin Muck	<i>CDC Board, Crawford County Memorial Hospital</i>	Crawford County
Rory Weis	<i>CDC Board, Denison Municipal Utilities</i>	Crawford County
Mike Earl	<i>CDC Board, Neppel Real Estate</i>	Crawford County
Lori Brotherton	<i>CDC Board, Cobblestone Inn & Suites- Majestic Hills</i>	Crawford County
Eric Kohler	<i>CDC Board, Monogram Quality Foods</i>	Crawford County
Jessica Garcia	<i>CDC Board, Western Iowa Tech Community College</i>	Crawford County
Jay Mendlik	<i>CDC Board, AvailaBank</i>	Crawford County
Rachel Desy	<i>CDC Office Manager</i>	Crawford County
Evan Blakley	<i>CDC Executive Director</i>	Crawford County
Everett Grasty	<i>Midwest Partnership Board, County Supervisor</i>	Guthrie County
Karen Varley	<i>Midwest Partnership Coordinator</i>	Guthrie County
Julie Zajicek	<i>Midwest Partnership Board, Panora State Bank</i>	Guthrie County
Jerry Sullivan	<i>Midwest Partnership Board, Farmers State Bank</i>	Guthrie County
Joyce Heaton	<i>Midwest Partnership Board</i>	Guthrie County
Brad Hayes	<i>Midwest Partnership Board, BH Appraisals</i>	Guthrie County
Dawn Pothoff	<i>SETD Board Treasurer, John Morrow CPA</i>	Sac County
Larry Coon	<i>SETD Board Vice President</i>	Sac County

Name	Position	County Represented
Jim Mickelson	<i>SETD Board Member</i>	<i>Sac County</i>
Jim Wissler	<i>SETD Board Member, County Supervisor</i>	<i>Sac County</i>
Theresa Bailey	<i>SETD Board Member, Schaller City Clerk</i>	<i>Sac County</i>
Laurie Westergaard	<i>SETD Board Member</i>	<i>Sac County</i>
Cynthia Finley	<i>SETD Board Member, Auburn City Council</i>	<i>Sac County</i>
Brandy Ripley	<i>SETD Executive Director</i>	<i>Sac County</i>
Chris Mason	<i>SETD Board President, Williams Contracting</i>	<i>Sac County</i>

Region XII EDD Policy Council



Government Representatives

Name	Government	Position
Rick Thompson	Audubon County	County Supervisor
Rich Ruggles	Carroll County	County Supervisor
Eric Skoog	Crawford County	County Supervisor
John Muir	Greene County	County Supervisor
Jack Lloyd	Guthrie County	County Supervisor
Ranell Drake	Sac County	County Supervisor
Barb Jacobsen	City of Audubon	Mayor
Jane Huen	Greene County	County Auditor
Gary VanAernam	Audubon County	County Supervisor
Peggy Toft	City of Exira	Exira City Council
Stephanie Hausman	Carroll County	County Supervisor
Steve Druivenga	City of Lake View	Mayor
Jean Heiden	Crawford County	County Supervisor
Everett Grasty	Guthrie County	County Supervisor
Dani Fink	Guthrie County	County Auditor
Peter Bardole	Greene County	County Supervisor
Scott Johnson	Carroll County	County Supervisor

Non-Government Representatives

Name	Company/Enterprise	Position
Rachel Desy	Chamber & Dev. Cncl. of Craw. Co.	Office Manager
Loren Schultz	Crawford County	Appointed by County Supervisors
Joan Godbersen	City of Odebolt	Assistant City Clerk
Lisa Grossman	City of Panora	City Administrator
Victoria Riley	Greene County News Online	Publisher
Jean Seidl	Carroll County	Retired
Lisa Jacobsen	Sac County	Retired



Region XII Staff

Name

Rick Hunsaker
Chris Whitaker
Mark Thomsen
Lauren Mortensen
Alex Foley
Luke Hamill
Ashley Brincks
Tami Lehmann

Position

Executive Director
Local Assistance Director
Fiscal Officer
Economic Development Planner II
Planner I
Planner I
Executive Secretary
RLF Administrator

Planning Process

Region XII COG staff met with the region's economic development groups both individually and together as a part of the CEDS planning process. Each of these development groups has further insight into their county, therefore meeting individually with them provided additional insight into the county as a whole. Planning background meetings began in late 2021 and continued into the first parts of 2022. Through these meetings, counties individually ranked the proposed goals, and added other goals which they felt were important to their respective counties. These comments were analyzed by COG staff and utilized during the CEDS Strategy Committee meeting. The Strategy Committee meeting finalized the goals that were most important to the region as a whole and that the committee felt would make the largest impact on the region. The CEDS Strategy Committee also analyzed the SWOT analysis and summary background data for the region. During the same meeting, the vision statement for the region was also determined based upon the comments from individual counties, the SWOT analysis, goals, and summary background information.

Throughout the planning process, a number of regional and local plans were referenced by both COG staff and the planning committee to ensure that the goals of the CEDS would compliment the other regional and community efforts. Some of these plans included:

- FY 2023 Region XII Transportation Planning Work Program
- FY 2022-2025 Regional Transportation Improvement Program
- FY 2020 Passenger Transportation Plan
- Carroll, Crawford, Greene, and Sac Counties Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020
- Audubon County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2019
- Guthrie and Adair Counties Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2018
- Carroll Area Development Corporation Strategic Plan
- Numerous City and County Strategic Plans
- Numerous City and County Housing Needs Assessments
- Numerous City and County Comprehensive Plans
- 2016 Region XII CEDS

Vision Statement

COG staff assisted the CEDS Strategy Committee with determining the region's CEDS Vision Statement. Staff wanted the vision statement to represent the services that the COG aims to provide the region as well as represent where the committee feels the region is moving. The CEDS will guide the region, its leaders, and the Region XII EDD in creating a region that aims for continued economic development and improvement. To complete this vision, the CEDS focuses on furthering economic resilience, building a more diverse economy, and improving the overall living environment for the citizens which will result in a prosperous region.

The Region XII EDD aims to improve the overall quality of life for the citizens of the region through long-term economic growth and diversity.

Region XII's Role

Region XII Council of Governments not only promotes economic resilience, it acts as a convener and facilitator for regional resilience. Created by the six county boards of supervisors in 1973, the COG has grown to facilitate multi-community collaboration and development of all types, providing initiatives within the region that are needed and otherwise not provided.

In order to facilitate discussions between economic development groups during all economic times, COG staff developed the Western Iowa Advantage Group which brings the economic developers from each county together monthly. This group works to create economic stability during steady economic times, and assists local businesses respond to economic shocks. Some of these efforts have included: gathering data, marketing the region, updating management tools (e.g. available sites and buildings), sharing ideas, discussing economic conditions, and planning forums for major issues (e.g. workforce and housing in the past).

WIAD has also looked at entrepreneurship and businesses succession planning, two seemingly small activities which both have a huge impact on the economies of our cities.

The Western Iowa Advantage group is only one way that the EDD brings groups together. Region XII assists communities develop and market county-wide roundtables which allow the communities within the county to network and discuss current and potential projects. They also discuss their current projects and challenges. These roundtables also allow COG staff to further understand the needs of the communities from the service area. COG staff are a resource when possible, and are often the presenters as experts on certain topics. In many instances the COG helps bring in outside experts to discuss topics of necessity or interest to help guide the region into economic prosperity.

During times of economic shock, Region XII is an information hub for individuals, communities, and businesses. The COG receives information from a variety of sources and then distributes said information to the masses. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified the desire for certain types of data, contacts, and miscellaneous information, in which staff was able to provide information received to the public within a short period of time.

The COG convenes leaders of city governments in the region separately from the economic developers. COG staff work with individual county economic development boards to impart information and deepen their understanding of pressing issues.

The COG is also at the center of many projects which help the region expand its business base and make the region a place where workers wish to reside and businesses would like to locate. They “base” activities to help the region be a location of choice include recreation, housing, community appearance, Main Street, local governance, and like activities.

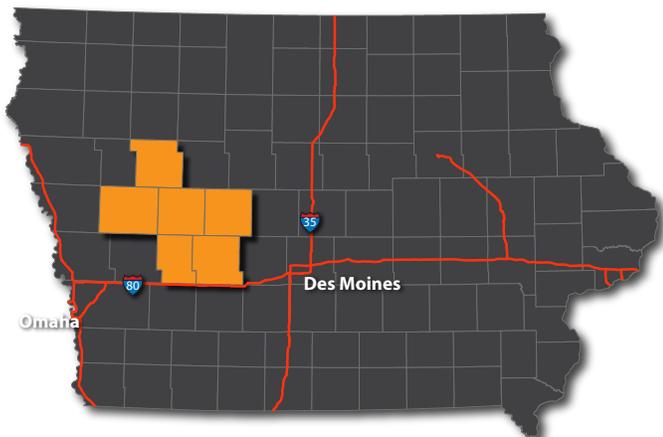


Executive Summary

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) serves as an update of the 2016 Region XII CEDS. This update will cover the next five years. It will serve as the basis for monitoring and evaluating the region's long term economic goals and strategies and coordinate the economic development activities in the region. The CEDS process and document should be used as a tool for developing goals and strategies that will guide the economic growth of the region.

The CEDS fulfills the requirements of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) as Region XII is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD). A CEDS must be approved by the EDA for counties and communities to be eligible for EDA funding programs. Local community leaders, economic developers, schools, private businesses, etc. served as the CEDS Committee and with input from community surveys updated the goals, tasks, performance measures, schedule and evaluation indicators for the region. The CEDS will assist in creating new partnerships in the region and strengthen existing ones while promoting change and quality of life improvements for residents.

Region XII Council of Governments is the organization responsible for preparing and reporting program progress. Region XII COG serves a six county area in west central Iowa, including Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie, and Sac Counties. Located in Carroll, the agency is centrally located in relationship to the cities, counties and nonprofit organizations it serves. Region XII provides community, economic development, and general technical assistance for the area. It also provides housing assistance, transit service and workforce development services.



Region XII is primarily agriculture with over 95% of the land consisting of farmland. Even with this decrease in farmland, the agriculture and manufacturing industries continue to be the largest employers within the region. These jobs generally do not pay high wages resulting in below average household income levels. The rural nature of the region has led young residents to leave to pursue careers elsewhere. Many high school graduates in the area leave the region for higher education and end up living and working in larger metropolitan areas.

	2020 Figure	% Change from 2016
Regional Population	72,167	-1.86%
Laborforce Participants	37,479	-10.63%
Unemployment Rate (04/22)	2.1%	-1.2%
Agricultural Land	95%	0%
Median Household Income	\$55,746	15.31%
Median Housing Value	\$107,967	22.34%

Overall, the economic conditions within the Region XII EDD have not changed significantly within the past six years. The region did experience a period of economic hardship while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, but overall the region is rebounding from this period. The region continues to be driven by agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Wage levels continue to be under the state and national averages. From 2010 to 2020, the region saw a decline in population of 2,504 residents or 3.35%. While each county has a different median age, each individual county, except for Crawford County, has a higher median age than the state of Iowa's median age of 38.3. Crawford County has a current median age of 36.4.

While the region saw sizeable increases in both the median household income value and the median housing value, these numbers still fall below the state and national figures. The regional housing stock continues to decline and currently 43% of the housing stock is 83 years or older.

Regional strengths provide solid foundations to continue to improve the region. The strengths of the region include the schools, the region's agricultural

base, the communities, economic diversity, health care options, utilities, and energy sources. Each of these strengths provide different opportunities for the region. While it is important to recognize the strengths of the region, it is also important to recognize the weaknesses and where there is room for improvement. Identified weaknesses include housing, workforce recruitment, population, workforce, community funding, and spatial sustainability. Opportunities within the region include housing, tourism, remote work, development, and natural hazards. Each opportunity presents different challenges and successes and needs to be evaluated prior to beginning projects surrounding the presented opportunity. The threats within the region are things that are mostly out of the committee's hands and include housing, workforce, population, and online shopping. Further explanation of these items can be found in the SWOT Analysis section of this plan.

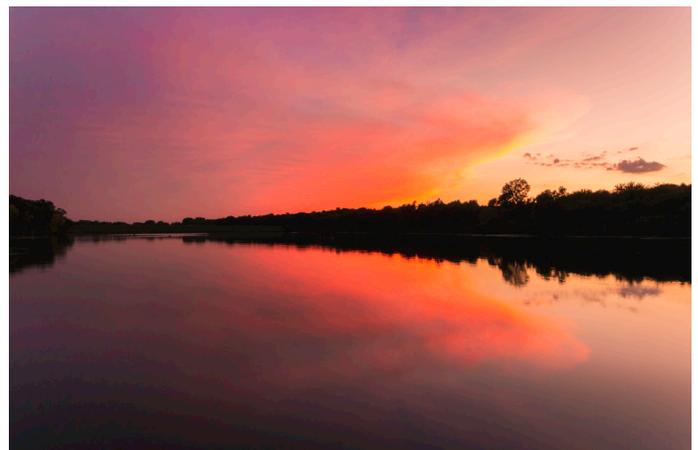
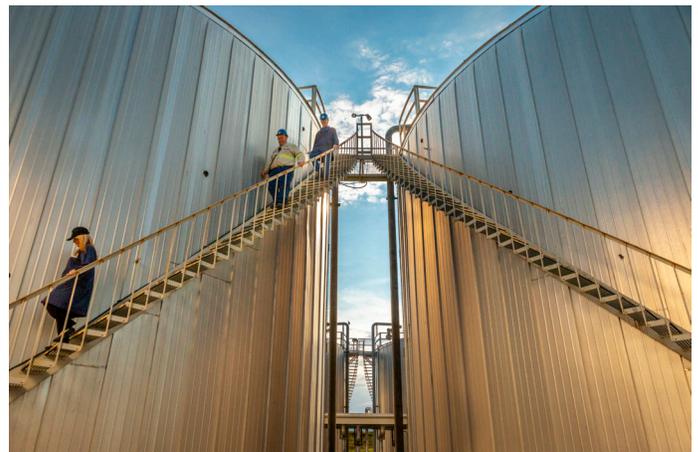
The examination of the region's background information as well as the completion of the SWOT analysis helped the CEDS committee develop the action plan which will help guide the EDD into the future. The committee, through several meetings, determined that there are eight goals that are the focus of the region over the next five years. These goals include:

- Increase inventory and improve quality of the region's housing stock
- Diversify the region's economic base
- Increase and enhance the regional labor force
- Secure, increase, and promote regional funding programs
- Improve and expand major infrastructure networks
- Increase and market developed sites and available buildings
- Create a service sharing network for governments
- Increase visitation, usability, and revenue at the region's tourist attractions

The action plan for these goals describes these goals as well as the tasks to be implemented to accomplish these goals. The action plan also provides performance measures, costs, and organizations which will all be used to monitor progress and the success of each action.

While not explicitly stated in a particular section of this document, the document as a whole aims to provide economic resilience to the region. Meetings with stakeholders and the CEDS committee were happening during the COVID-19 Pandemic, therefore the committee members were deeply involved in the economic recovery of the region, and the experiences of these individuals is reflected throughout the SWOT analysis and goals in this plan. The conversations during the meetings with the committee were heavily focused on response-state initiatives as these were the projects/focus of the committee's current work. Conversations though were also steered towards steady-state initiatives as both are necessary to create an economy that can withstand all economic periods.

This document strives to provide a strategy to address the weaknesses and build on the region's strengths to improve the overall regional economy and quality of life. The document is dynamic in nature and may change in the coming years based on the economic climate and feedback from stakeholders.

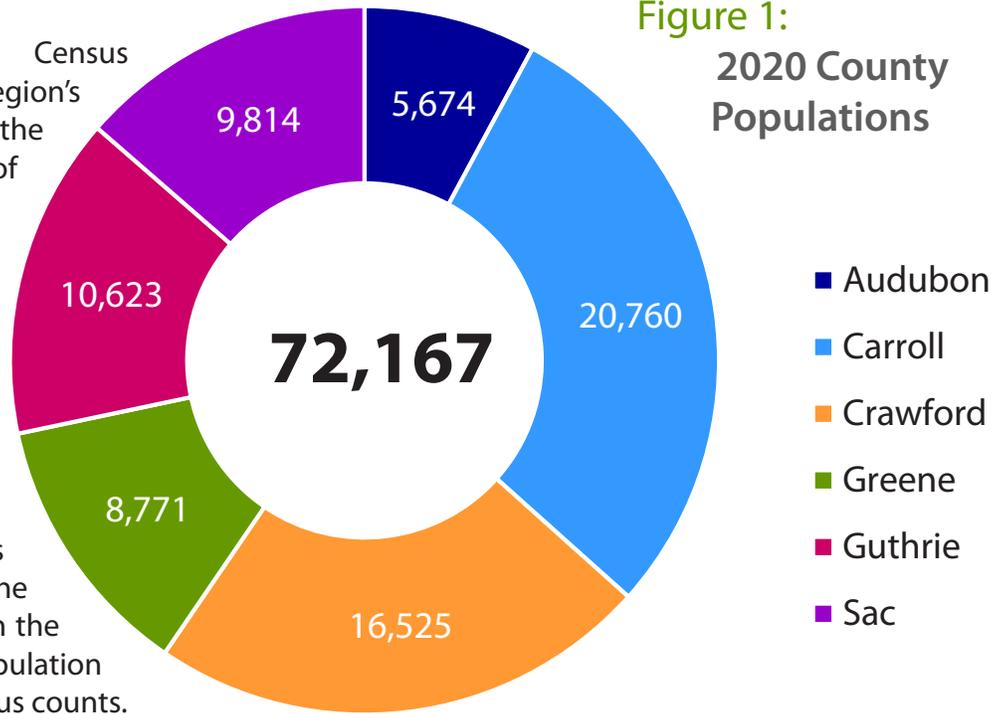




Summary Background

Regional Population

The 2020 United States Census determined that the region's population is 72,167. From the 2010 Census, this is a decrease of 3.35% or 2,504 residents. From 2010 to 2020, the State of Iowa saw an increase of 4.73%, the increase in state population and decrease in regional population has decreased the region's percent of the state's population to 2.3%, down 0.1% from 2.4% in 2010. Carroll and Crawford Counties continue to house over half of the region's population. Figure 1 on the right shows the regional population breakdown from the 2020 Census counts.



Population decline within the region continues to be an issue within the region. This trend began in the mid-1900s when the agriculture sector began to be more industrialized, requiring fewer hands to work the land and with animals. The industrialization of agriculture decreased the family size of farming families. This industrialization also allowed families to move into larger employment centers to seek work. The decreased family size and the out-migration of residents has continued into today, continuing the region's population decline.

Figure 2 displays the Census Bureau's population estimates from 1969-2020. In 1969, the population of the region was over 92,000 people, and in 2020, that number has dropped to 72,167. During the same period of time, the population of the State of Iowa grew from 2.8 million to 3.15 million.

From the 2010 Census to the 2020 Census, all counties within the region saw population loss. Carroll County experienced the smallest loss at -0.27%. While all the counties as a whole experienced population loss, 11 of the region's 56 communities experienced a population growth. These communities with population

Figure 2: Region XII Population, 1969-2020

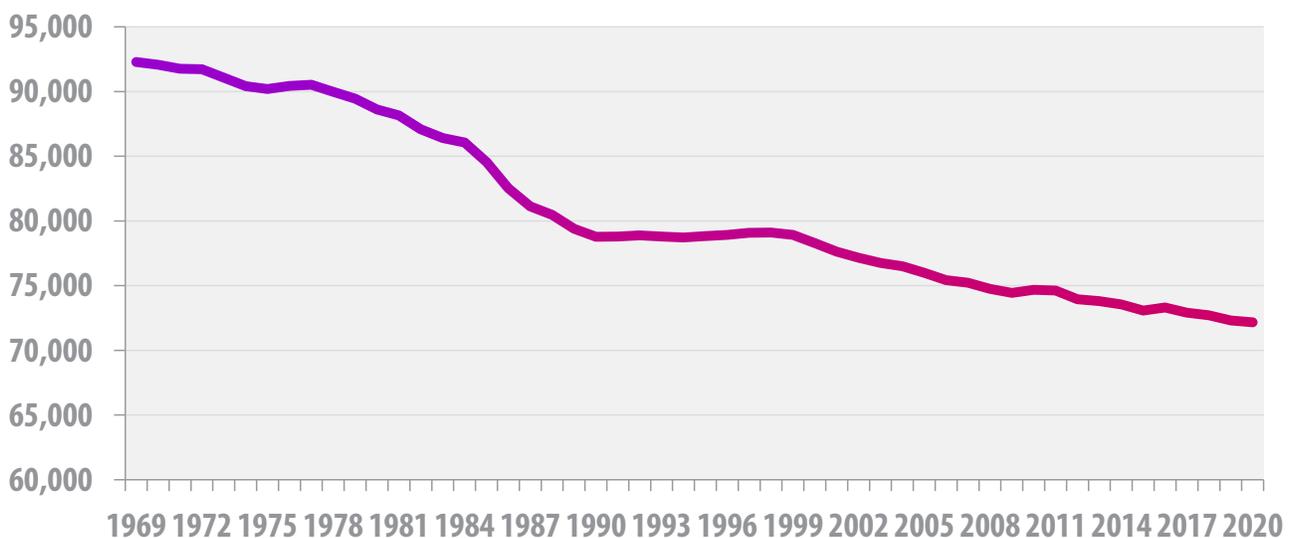
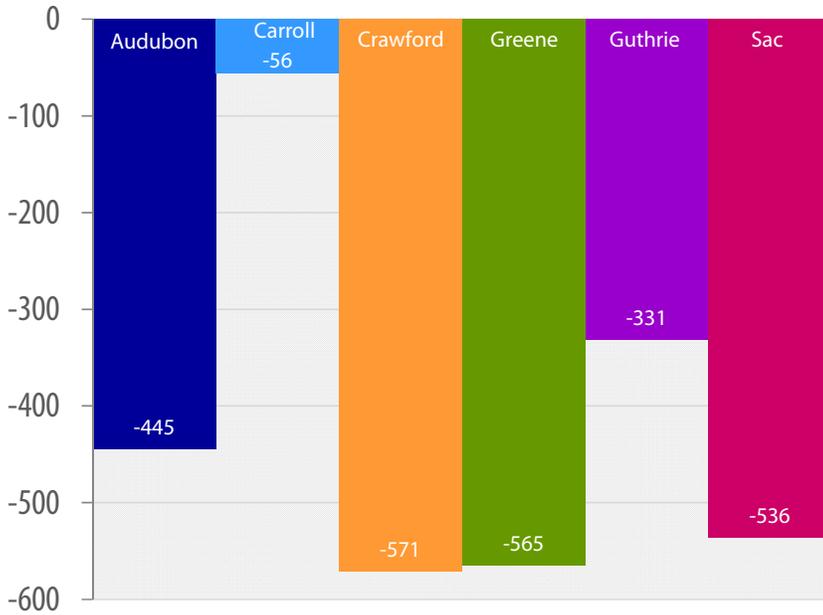


Figure 3: County Population Change, 2010-2020



growth experienced anywhere from 0.44% to 11.72% growth. Individual county population changes can be viewed in each county’s respective appendix.

It is important to note that during the past ten years, the region’s Hispanic or Latino (of any race) population has continued to grow. This can lead to the determination that the white population within the region has been steadily decreasing. The only county that saw a loss of this Hispanic and Latino population was Audubon County. The population that identifies as white alone has decreased from the 2010 Census to the 2020 Census. In 2010, the white alone population made up approximately 94% of the region’s total population. In 2020, this population cohort makes up 88% of the total regional population. From 2010 to

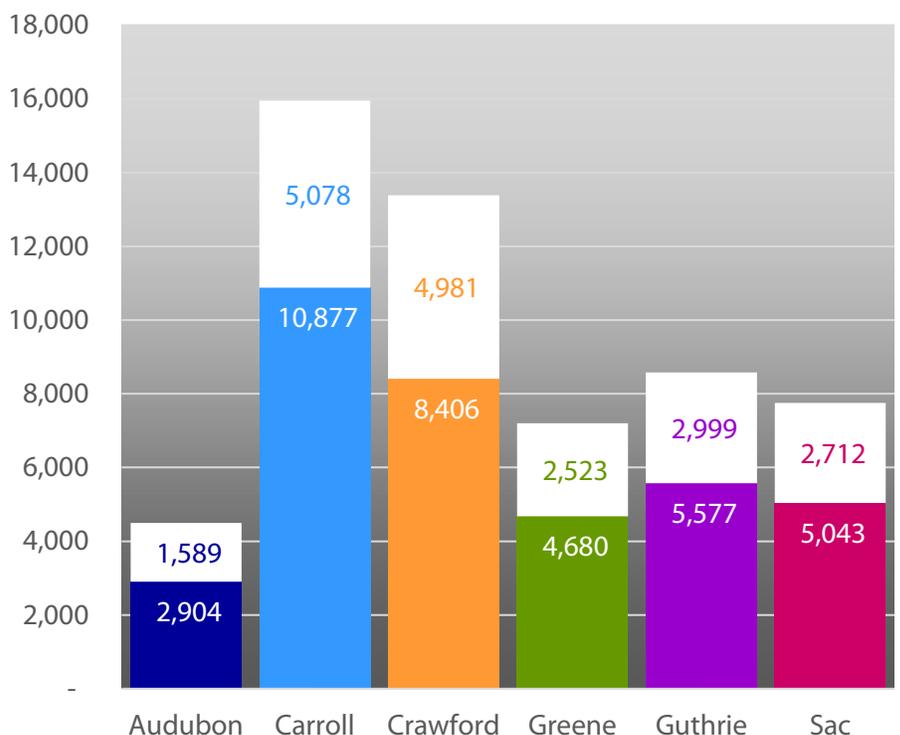
2020, the Hispanic or Latino population grew by 44% within the region’s counties and currently represents 8.75% of the region’s total population. In 2010, this cohort represented less than 6% of the region’s total population. Population diversification within the region can help the region be more resilient to economic shocks as individual population cohorts are willing to work in different industries and each cohort brings different strengths to their workplace and communities. A visual breakdown of individual county race statistics are available in each county’s respective appendix.

Laborshed

Figure 4 shows the participating and non-participating members of the region’s workforce by county. The numbers included in the chart represent those aged 16 and over who are eligible to participate in the region’s workforce. While evaluating Figure 4, it is important to note that while those who are unemployed are considered non-participants, they only make up a small portion of the region’s non-participating workforce. The majority of the non-participating workforce is made up those who are older residents who are retired and not seeking work.

The unemployment rates displayed in table 1 show the yearly averages of each county that are not seasonally adjusted. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates reached uncommon highs. Crawford

Figure 4: 2020 Region XII Laborforce Participants (color) and Non-participants (white)



County continues to see an unemployment rate above 5% while the other five counties have unemployment rates which are returning to “normal.”

From 2010 to 2020, each individual county saw a decrease in the number of total laborforce participants, which has led to a decrease of nearly 2,000 participants regionally. High unemployment rates throughout the region have forced pressure on the laborforce participants, reducing the total number of participating members.

Overall, the region as a whole is facing difficulties within the laborforce. Higher than normal unemployment rates and the unwillingness of the unemployed to seek employment has caused never before seen issues within the laborforce environment in the region.

Regional Workforce Ages

The age of the workforce is an important consideration for the region economically as Region XII as a whole continues to age at a faster rate than the state, a trend which has been common across rural Iowa for a number of years. Iowa, like many other Midwestern states also features proportionally older populations than the country as a whole. To the counties within the region, this is a threat, not only to the workforce, but the communities within the region. Figure 5 charts the median age of the population by county. It also compares the region to both the State of Iowa and the United States. All of Region XII’s counties have higher median ages compared to the state and nation except for Crawford County.

Educational Attainment

As the employment climate continues to change, the educational requirements of the workforce also changes. Figure 6 compares the highest level of educational attainment of the population aged 25 and above in Region XII, the State of Iowa, and the United States. Data from the 2020 American Community Survey Estimates show that Region XII has a higher percentage of the population with a high school diploma or equivalent than both the state and the United States. A higher percentage of the population in the High School Graduate cohort

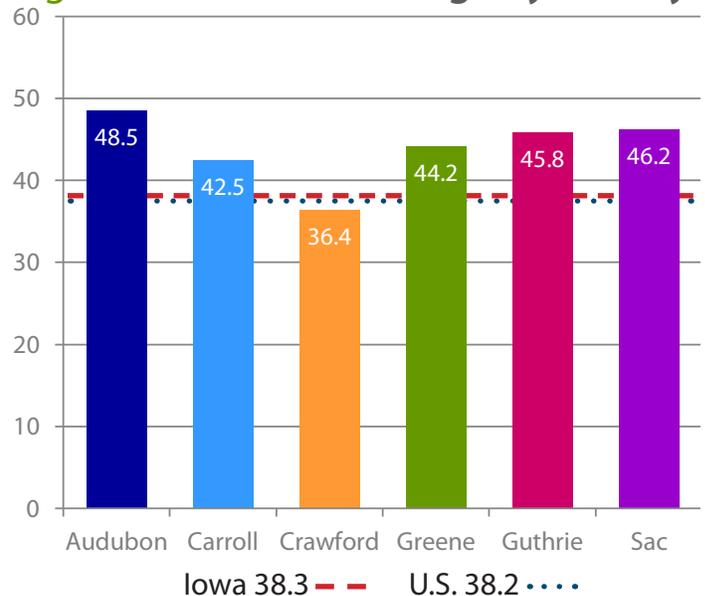
Table 1: County Unemployment Rates 2018-2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Audubon	2.5%	2.4%	3.4%	3.2%	2.7%
Carroll	1.9%	1.8%	3.9%	3.1%	2.3%
Crawford	3.4%	3.4%	5.1%	5.2%	5.5%
Greene	2.3%	2.3%	4.2%	3.4%	2.5%
Guthrie	2.6%	2.9%	4.9%	4.2%	3.8%
Sac	2.3%	2.2%	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%

Table 2: County and Regional Laborforce Participants, 2010 & 2020

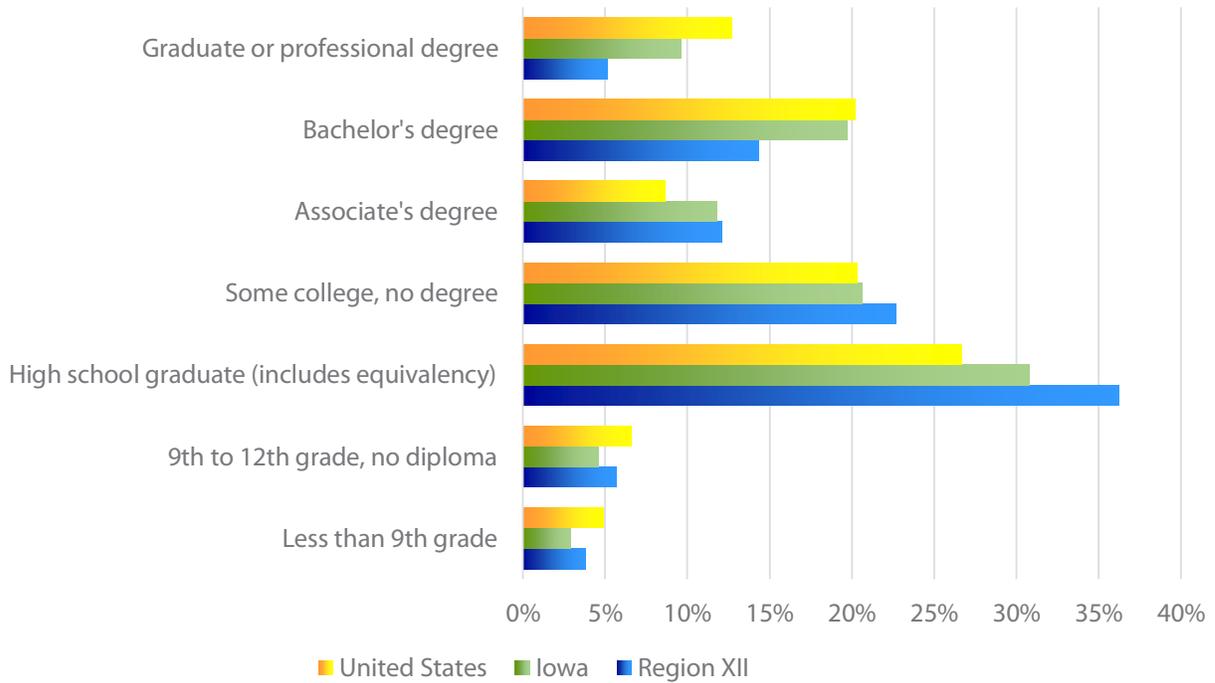
	2010	2020
Audubon	3,245	2,896
Carroll	11,383	10,877
Crawford	8,657	8,406
Greene	5,056	4,680
Guthrie	5,666	5,577
Sac	5,420	5,043
Region	39,427	37,479

Figure 5: 2020 Median Age by County



means that within the region there are fewer residents with varying degrees of collegiate education than both the state and country. The lower percentages of collegiate education levels is supported by the number of manufacturing, food processing, and service positions that are more reliant on reliability and work ethic than educational experiences.

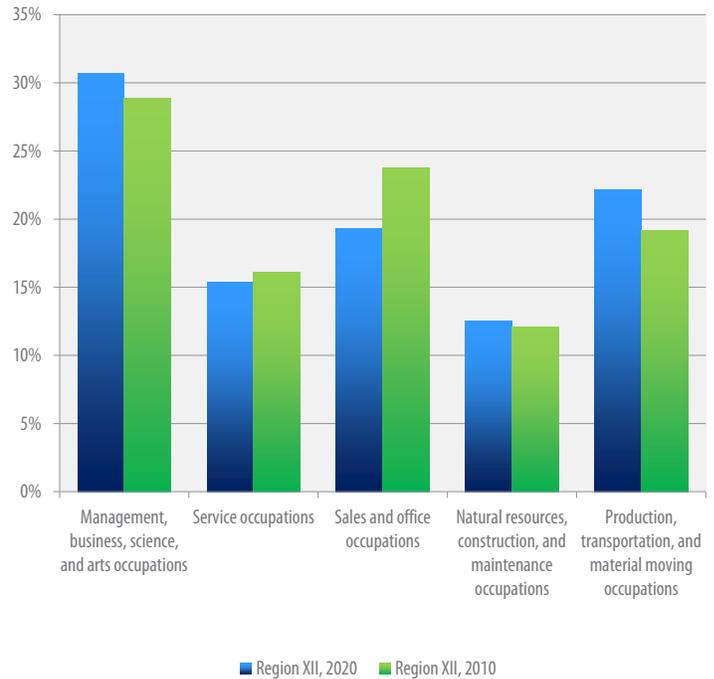
Figure 6: Highest Level of Education of Ages 25 and Up, 2020



Industry

The current breakdown of the regional population occupation compared to 2010 can be found in Figure 7. From 2010 to 2020, there were slight decreases in service occupations and sales and office occupations. Sales and office occupations saw the biggest change overall with a decrease of 4.5%. The decreases in the service occupations and sales and office occupations led to increases in the other three occupation categories. The largest employer in the six-county region, Greene County Medical Center, is a management, business, science and arts occupation employer. The second largest employer in the region, Smithfield Foods, falls under the second largest group of workers as a transportation and material moving occupation employer. A complete list of the region's largest employers, as well as the largest employers within each county can be located in the appendix.

Figure 7: Regional Occupation, 2010 & 2020

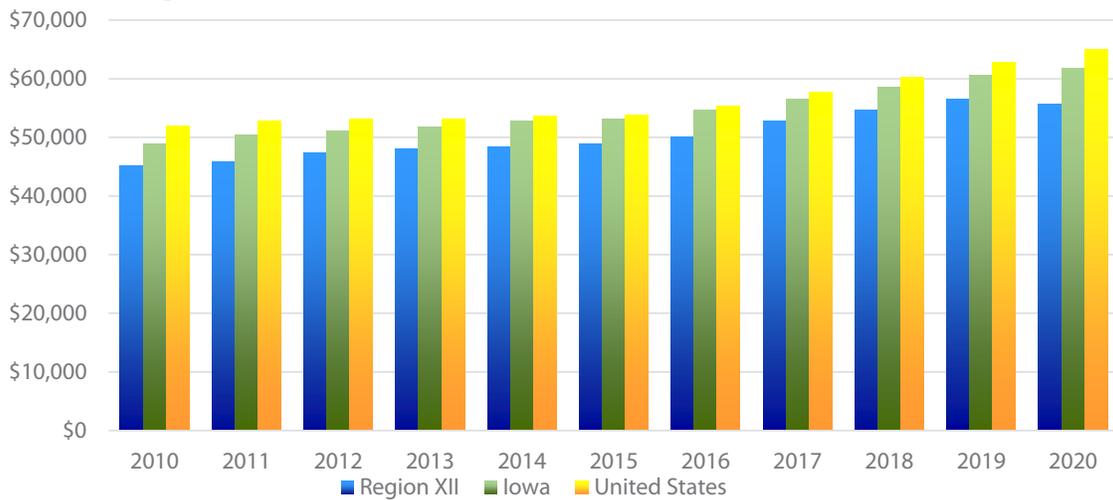


Household Income

The counties within the Region XII service area do not experience large differences in household income according to the American Community Survey Estimates. When compared to Iowa and the United States as a whole, the Region XII area has a lower income per household since 2010, as shown in figure 8. According to the most recent data from 2020, the region's median household income was \$6,089 behind the State of Iowa's median household

income and \$9,247 behind the Country's median. The American Community Survey estimates show that the region's median household income has increased by 23% since 2010. This increased growth is similar to both the state and nation.

Figure 8: Median Household Income, 2010-2020



Household Values

Region XII, when compared to Iowa and the United States, has a larger percentage of houses valued under \$100,000. Figure 9 shows the regional housing values compared to the state and country. Nearly 45% of the region’s housing stock is valued less than \$100,000. The region’s housing stock is aging and nearly 43% of the total housing stock is 83 years or older. Figure 10 shows the age of the regional housing stock from the American Community Survey Estimates. The older age of the region’s housing stock can help explain the housing values, as older homes require more upkeep and without the capital to do so, the homes fall into disrepair and begin to present health and safety hazards. The region has a median housing value of \$107,967, compared to the state of Iowa’s median of \$153,900.

Figure 9: 2020 Housing Values

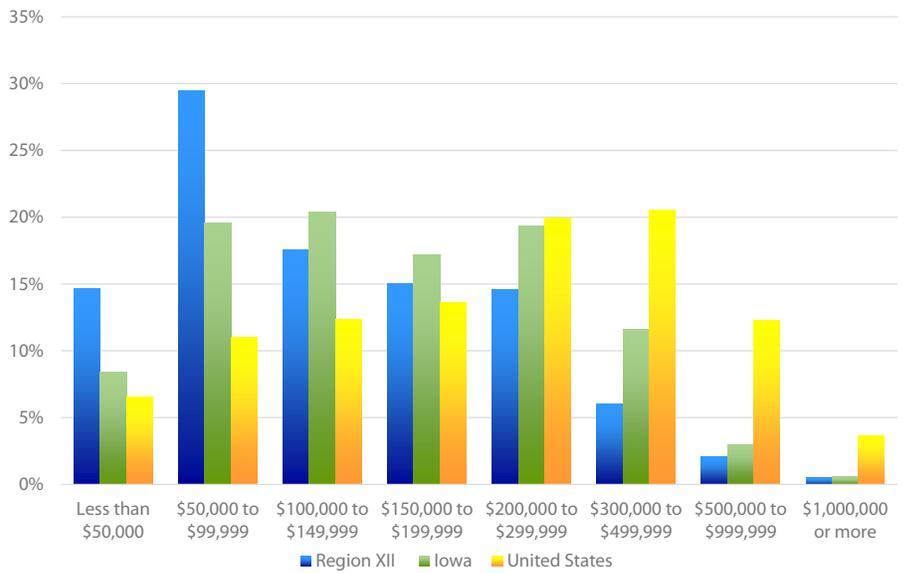
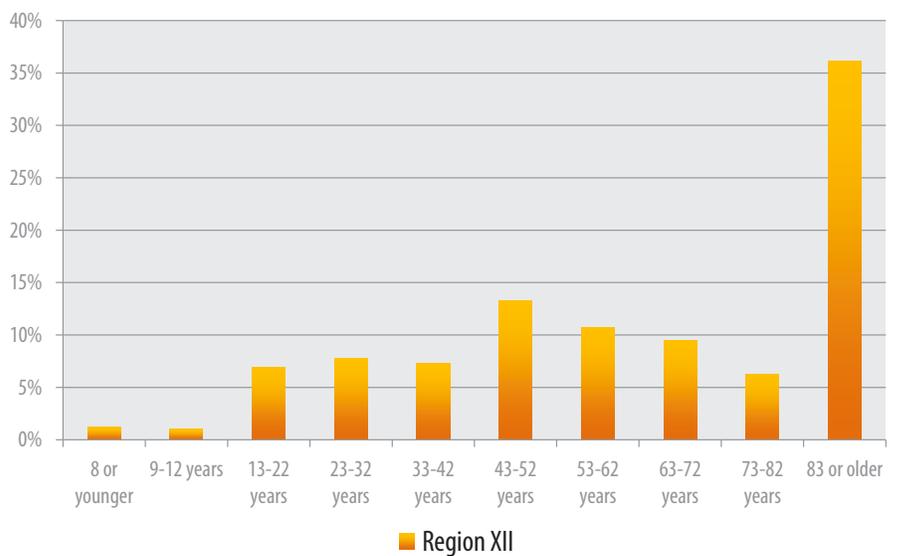


Figure 10: 2020 Age of Regional Housing Stock



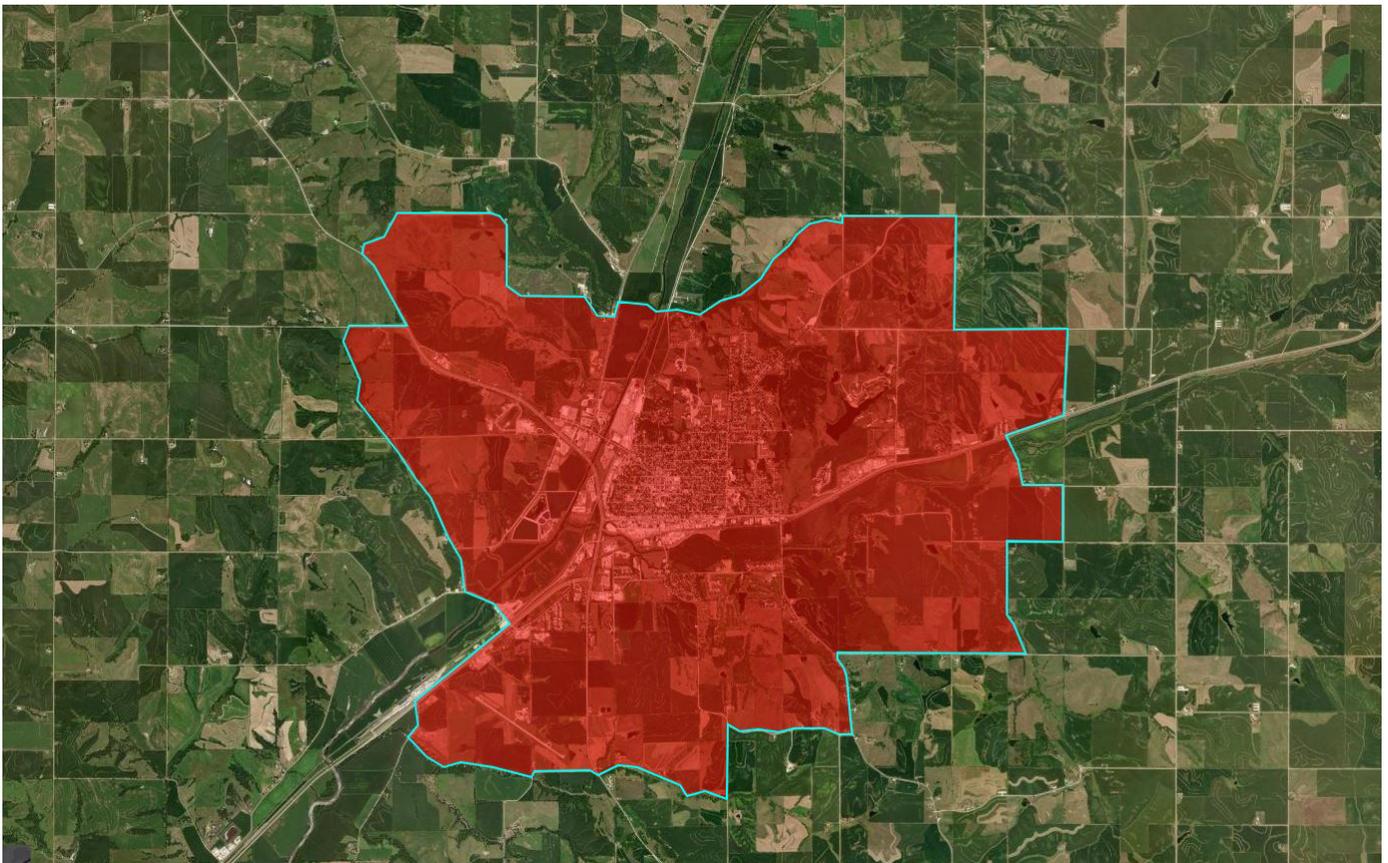
Opportunity Zone

Within Region XII's six counties, there is one designated opportunity zone. This designated zone is located within Crawford County and encompasses the City of Denison. According to available data from Esri in 2022, the City of Denison's population is 8,249 residents. The female population comprises 49% of the population and males represent 51% of the city's population. The community has a diversity index of 81.6. The population is 60% White, 50% Hispanic or Latino, 28% some other race and less than 15% of the population is Black or African American, Two or More Races, American Indian, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Region XII, the local government, the local economic development organization and other interested parties continue to develop plans for the opportunity zone. The opportunity zone is a part of a number of local and regional plans including a housing needs assessment, the regional long range transportation plan, a regional hazard mitigation plan, the previous CEDS, and a number of other plans. These plans

have helped create a plan for the opportunity zone moving into the future. While the action plan of this document does not specifically list the goals that pertain to the opportunity zone, based off the overall goal of developing opportunity zones, a number of the goals pertain to the zone. The diversification of the region's economic base and secure, increase, and promote regional funding programs are two of the goals which most directly impact the identified opportunity zone.

Map 1: Denison Opportunity Zone





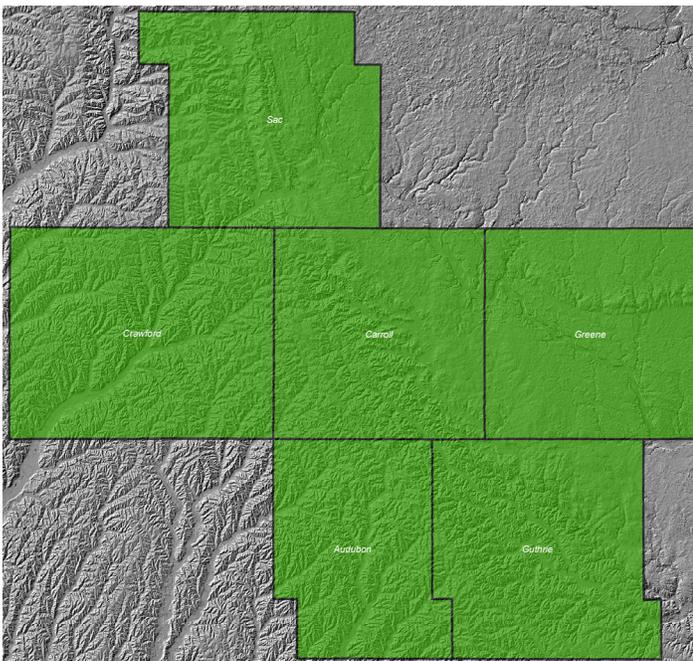
Environment

Geology/Topography

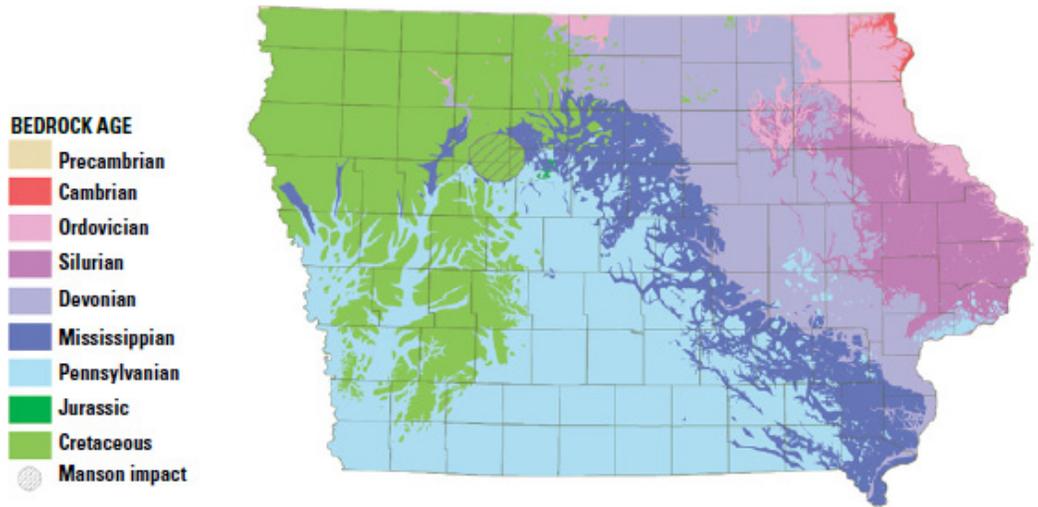
The bedrock found within the Region XII EDD is from the Mississippian, Pennsylvanian, and Cretaceous periods. The soils present in this area are fertile, well drained and well suited for row crops. The presence of these soils has allowed the agriculture economy within the region to thrive. Within the region there are seven predominate soil types which are mostly conducive for farming and pasture lands with others being prime lands for timber or wetlands (unless drained).

Region XII's elevation is mostly rolling hills with some areas of flat lands. The lowest locations can be found around the rivers and streams within the region. In order to be able to farm land, farmers utilize terraces to reduce the slope of land. When constructing large buildings, it is not uncommon for a large amount of soil to have to either be moved in or out to make a level foundation. Map 2 shows the elevation of the region.

Map 2: Region XII Elevation



Map 1: Bedrock Geology Map



Wetlands

The soils located within the Region XII Economic Development District at one time, were prime for wetlands, but due to the desire to farm the region, these lands were drained to accommodate farming practices, and lands that more moist than others are utilized largely for pastures. Due to the actions of past residents, there are not a many wetlands still present today. Wetlands that are still present are located near rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds and are most commonly freshwater emergent wetlands.

Hazardous and Toxic Substances

All of the six counties within the Region XII EDD have natural gas pipelines running through all or portions of the county, and four out of the six counties have hazardous liquid pipelines running though all or portions of the counties. The region is home to agricultural cooperatives which house a number of hazardous and toxic substances including anhydrous ammonia. This substance is utilized by farmers in their fields as a fertilizer to increase crop production. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources tracks the spills within the state of Iowa and maintains a Hazardous Material Release Database.

Wildlife

The region is home to diverse wildlife which has created tourism opportunities. Audubon County has capitalized on the diverse avian species located within the county to create a birding experience. Also located within the region are a number of threatened or endangered species and plants. These species

include the Northern Long-eared Bat, the Topeka Shiner, the Prairie Bush-clover, and the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid. These animals and plants are protected during all projects that Region XII completes within the service area. The presence of all wildlife within the region is utilized by numerous organizations to promote the region.

Air Quality

The region's air quality meets or is cleaner than the national standard. There are no nonattainment areas located within the Region XII service area. A report released from the EPA in April 2022 showed that there are few nonattainment areas within the State of Iowa as a whole, and the areas that are considered nonattainment or maintenance areas include: Pottawattamie County, Muscatine County, and the City of Muscatine.

Cultural and Historic Resources

The six counties which make up the Region XII Economic Development District have rich histories and the residents are proud of their cultures. Due to this, there are a large number of cultural and historic resources within the region, with a large number of the resources being recognized by the National Register of Historic Places as important to the region. Audubon County is home to 14 listed National Register of Historic Places including, the original and current Audubon County Courthouse, Kimballton's Commercial District, a number of homes throughout the county, and even a rural district. Carroll County also has 14 properties on the National Register. These properties include the Carnegie Library in Carroll, the Fobes Octagon Barn in Lanesboro, numerous rural bridges, the Manning Commercial Historic District, and the Chicago & Northwestern Passenger Depot and Baggage room in Carroll. Crawford County also has 14 National Register listed properties. These properties include rural bridges, the Crawford County Courthouse, the Dow House, the Klondike Hotel in Manning, and numerous homes throughout the county. Within Greene County, there are 17 properties listed on the National Register. These properties include the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Depot in Jefferson, the Frantz Round Barn in Grand Junction, numerous rural bridges, and portions of the Lincoln Highway which runs from east to west through the



county. Guthrie County has 7 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These properties include the All Saints Catholic Church in Stuart, a farmstead historic district in Coon Rapids, the Sexton Hotel in Stuart, and Springbrook State Park, Civilian Conservation Corps Area in Guthrie Center. Sac County has 12 properties listed including areas of Blackhawk State Park in Lake View, the Chautauqua Park Historic District in Sac City, the Chicago and North Western Passenger Depot in Wall Lake, and the Sac County Courthouse.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

The region's most predominant industries is the agriculture industry which thrives off of the prime and unique farmlands present throughout the six county region. The average farmland value in Iowa in 2021 was \$9,751 per acre, up \$2,192 from \$7,559 in 2020. The value of farmland in Iowa as a whole continues to rise. Prime and unique farmlands within the region are vital to the agriculture industry, therefore any conversion of farmland to developed land is evaluated by numerous parties before the conversion is made.

Environmental Justice

The Economic Development Districts aims to provide the same services to all people and communities regardless of race, color, national origin, or income. A portion of the district's program aim to ensure those that have historically received unfair treatment are brought to the forefront and served first. These bulk of these programs fall into the district's housing and transportation sectors. To ensure all community members have the same opportunity to provide feedback and input on large projects, the communities within the region hold public hearings for projects in which federal funds are received to ensure there is fair treatment.



SWOT Analysis

Region XII's role in the state's economy is somewhat unique as it is lacking a major urban center. The region is located approximately the same distance from Omaha, Nebraska; Des Moines, Iowa; and Sioux City, Iowa. Because of this, the City of Carroll has become the regional employment and retail center of west central Iowa. Region XII attempts to employ a regional approach which focuses on how the six counties can supplement each other by promoting interaction among the different counties. Each county has an extensive list of strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats. The summary on the following pages represent the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are present within the region as a whole. The write-up is not exhaustive, but hits the points that have been repeated numerous times, making them some of the bigger items impacting the region. Individual county lists are found in this document's appendix.

Evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the region helped the CEDS committee and COG staff determine where energy and resources should be focused to further develop and assist the region's economy. The region is starting to return to normal after the COVID-19 pandemic caused shock waves through all portions of the region's economy. The strengths that have been recognized are things that even through the pandemic shock have been recognized as strong points for the region as a whole. The weaknesses recognized may be ones that have been recently recognized, or may have been present within the region for a while. Opportunities may have presented themselves during the pandemic (online store presence), or may have been present for a number of years (tourism development). The majority of the threats that were recognized are threats which have been impacting the region for a number of years. The further exploration of these topics laid out in their categories has helped the committee develop the goals later discussed in this plan.

Equitable development within the region was discussed during the completion of the SWOT analysis. Discussions with the economic development groups and the CEDS Strategy Committee made placing this topic difficult within a specific category in the SWOT. Comments were made about how Region XII assists all communities within the district regardless of size and resources. Nearly all programs that Region XII offers for residents and communities work to improve the lives of the low-to-moderate income populations, the elderly, and veterans. There are some programs that are available to all communities, regardless of low-to-moderate income status. While the committees felt Region XII was excelling at this type of development, they felt there were also some weaknesses within the program development and opportunities to improve the programs overall. Some programs are felt to have too many hurdles for the elderly/disabled, or working class to complete within a timely manner, or have additional requirements which make projects cost more, limiting the amount of work that can be completed for a certain price. Comments were also made about how limited the program availability is. These comments focused around how many funds are actually available and the strict guidelines that have to be met, which leave out some populations by small margins.



- ◆ Schools - The region is home to variety of school options from preschool to high school and beyond. Each of these educational institutions provide a high-quality education, close to home.
 - ◆ Agriculture - The rich agricultural land provides fertile ground utilized to fuel to the large agricultural base within the region. The land is not only beneficial to the agriculture industry, it creates a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities for the public.
 - ◆ Communities - Communities within the region are able to offer a high quality of living at a low cost. These communities boast low crime rates and residents who support one another.
 - ◆ Diversity - The economic diversity of the region provides a variety of employment opportunities to the residents of the region. Within the EDD, there are small-family owned, Main Street businesses, as well as larger, national businesses.
 - ◆ Healthcare - Even though rural, the region has access to hospitals, dental clinics, vision clinics, and chiropractors within a short distance's drive. Specialists are also brought into the region's facilities to better accommodate the needs of the residents.
 - ◆ Utilities - The communities and many rural portions of the region are served by utilities that have been designed to have ample excess to accommodate additional development. The region is also ideally located to major transportation routes.
 - ◆ Energy - A number of communities own their own energy sources and have an adequate supply for their current populations and even adequate room to grow. The region is open to utilizing alternative energy sources and has multiple wind and solar farms.
- ◆ Housing - The region as a whole is experiencing a housing shortage at all levels. There is an expressed need for owner and renter-occupied units of different types.
 - ◆ Recruitment - Many factors coupled together have made recruitment of additional workforce challenging, leaving many regional businesses with open positions and staff shortages.
 - ◆ Population - The region's population is not only shrinking, but aging as well. Family attraction to the region is difficult due to limited daycare availability and housing availability.
 - ◆ Workforce - The region's population continues to shrink and age. This has reduced the availability of the trade businesses which provide vital services to the region's population. The inability to attract new/ additional workforce puts strains on businesses which are in need of the additional help.
 - ◆ Community Funding - Communities are funded through property taxes and the shrinking and aging populations has decreased the amount of funds the communities have to include in their budgets annually. Limited funding has made completing necessary upgrades to community infrastructure and facilities challenging.
 - ◆ Spatial Sustainability - A majority of the region's communities have access to ample land for development, so instead of developing within the community's current neighborhoods, cities look to expand outside their current footprint for new development.



◆ Housing - The construction of new or rehabilitation of current housing is recognized as a need in all communities. Determining how to construct the housing to be affordable for the buyer and profitable for the developer has been a hurdle. Also, rehabilitation funds for the current housing stock continue to decrease, making attractive housing for the workforce limited.

◆ Tourism - Revenues from tourism positively impact the region. Expanding the current tourism and recreation opportunities within the region will further increase the revenues, allowing communities to further develop their tourism opportunities.

◆ Remote Work - Employers and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic recognized that the infrastructure needed to work remotely is in place. This could allow employers to fill positions with employees from other regions of the state or even country.

◆ Development - There are a wide variety of land types and sizes available as well as buildings available for development. These locations are spread throughout the entire region making them attractive to diverse businesses. Communities have either installed infrastructure to foster development, or have the infrastructure in a position to be easily developed further.

◆ Natural Hazards - In the recent past, there have been increasingly more natural hazards within the region. A large portion of the region has completed hazard mitigation planning, and some of the communities have even started implementing their plans. The current availability of funding creates opportunities for all communities to plan for when these disasters happen.

◆ Housing - The condition of the region's housing stock and lack of available units has hindered economic development from different angles. Limited available units makes it hard to attract workforce, which makes attracting additional industries/businesses difficult. The limited stock also makes it difficult for households which outgrow their current home or want to downsize to stay within the region.

◆ Workforce - The region is facing a labor shortage. Employers have offered additional incentives to recruit additional workers, but the recruitment remains difficult. This difficult recruitment of employees creates the treat of employers removing themselves from the region.

◆ Population - The population continues in a general decline and continues to age. This decline is felt by employers, communities, and other regional organizations. These population trends also have reduced the number of students enrolled in the region's school districts which has created additional issues within the school systems.

◆ Online Shopping - Online shopping, while it provides ease and sometimes cheaper prices, harms smaller local businesses who either cannot afford to go online or are unsure of how to market themselves worldwide on the internet.



Action Plan

Action Plan

The intent of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is to change and improve the course of business development in the region, while building on many of the region's existing economic strengths. The action plan will also assist the region become more resilient to potential shocks to the economy. On the following pages is the regional action plan which describes the region's goals and the tasks which will be implemented towards completing these goals. Some of the goals on the following pages have been developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which forced the region to take a further look into how it can serve itself and respond to new needs of its residents.

Economic Resilience Efforts

The region has developed goals, objectives, and strategies through its CEDS planning process that when successful will further enhance the region's resiliency and overcome the challenges and deficiencies that have been identified. Each of the region's six main goals focus on different aspects of the region's economy and the tasks to be implemented will create a more stable economy during steady-state periods, and will allow the economy to respond to shocks in a quicker and more efficient manner. The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the most recent economic shocks that the region's economy faced, and intensified some of the region's current economy short-comings. Goals within the action plan over the next pages will bolster the region's economic resilience efforts.

Schedule Acronyms:

ST- Short Term (0-2 years)
MT- Mid-Term (3-4 years)
LT- Long Term (Year 5)
OG- Ongoing

Cost Ranges:

Minimal – cost estimate is \$9,999 or less
Low – cost estimate ranges from \$10,000 to \$99,999
Moderate – cost estimate ranges from \$100,000 to \$299,999
High – cost estimate is \$300,000 or greater

Funding/Potential Partners Acronyms:

CCs- Community Colleges
CDBG- Community Development Block Grant Program
Cnty. Cnsvtn.- County Conservation Boards
Co. ED- County Economic Development Organizations
CSDs- Community School Districts
EDA- Economic Development Administration
ENH- Enhance Iowa Grant Program
FHLB- Federal Home Loan Bank
HFI- Homes for Iowa (Iowa Prison Industries)
IEDA- Iowa Economic Development Authority
IDNR- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
IDOT- Iowa Department of Transportation
IFA- Iowa Finance Authority
NRCS- Natural Resources Conservation Service
RT- Region XII COG
WIAD- Western Iowa Advantage
USDA- United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development

Goal #1: Increase inventory and improve quality of the region's housing stock

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Complete housing studies throughout the region	RT, Co. ED groups, local housing organizations, Public \$- Conduct housing studies in each community every 5 years	Determine housing conditions, prioritize funding opportunities	Number of housing studies completed	OG	Minimal-Low
Recruit developers to partner with communities	Co. ED groups, RT, Private \$- Facilitate meetings between developers and communities, provide technical assistance, secure funding	Create new housing developments throughout the region, provide adequate affordable homes	Number of housing developments, amount of private investment, amount of private funds invested	OG	Minimal
Investigate rental opportunities and evaluate gaps	RT, Counties, Cities, local housing organizations- Study level of adequacy of rental market for the region to see if it meets needs	Develop report detailing rental needs throughout region, prioritize areas in need of development	Rental unit report	LT	Minimal
Provide assistance which will increase the availability of residential lots	RT, CDBG, IEDA, local housing organizations- Apply for funds and assist communities to prepare lots	Increase the number of residential lots available which would increase the number of housing units	Number of residential lots available	LT	Low
Work with communities to create code enforcement programs	RT, Cities- Collaborate with cities to determine the needs of the city and provide assistance creating enforcement programs	More properties being kept up to code	Number of code enforcement programs created	LT	Minimal-Low
Continue to market housing rehabilitation programs	RT, IEDA, FHLB, USDA- Apply for funds to regularly replenish these programs, provide assistance to communities in applying for housing grants and administration	Secure funds for DPA and Rehab programs, provide assistance for homeowners and improve the housing stock	Amount of funds received, amount of private funds invested, number of homes rehabbed, number of community grants	OG	Minimal
Develop necessary partnerships to build new construction	RT, Counties, Cities- Facilitate meetings between cities and developers/contractors	Partnerships fostered to start the building of new residential districts	Number of new construction planned or built	OG	Minimal

Goal #1: Increase inventory and improve quality of the region's housing stock

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Financially assist housing unit preservation and production	RT, CDBG, IEDA- Apply for grants to assist in preserving the region's housing stock	Homes rehabilitated and constructed to enhance the region's housing stock	Number of homes rehabilitated or constructed	OG	High
Work with communities to develop and implement rental inspection programs to improve the quality of the region's rental units	RT, Cities- Develop rental inspection programs individualized to each community and provide COG staff to complete rental inspections	Improved rental unit quality throughout the region	Number of cities participating in rental inspection programs and number of units inspected	OG	Minimal
Encourage communities/ developers to construct housing for the mid-level income population	RT, Cities, Counties, HOME, IFA, HFI, Developers- Apply for grants to offset costs of construction to be able to market new construction to mid-level income populations. Encourage cities to develop housing through the HFI partnership. Foster conversations to encourage rental development.	New rental and owner-occupied units constructed to market towards the mid-level income population.	Number of new units (rental or owner-occupied) constructed and inhabited	OG	High
Assist communities develop second-story housing within their community	RT, Cities, IEDA, CDBG, Counties- Apply for grants to assist building owners create additional housing within the region's communities	Utilization of second-story units which currently are sitting vacant	Number of buildings creating second story residential units	OG	High

Goal #2: Diversify the region's economic base

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Support the expansion of infrastructure as a key component to future economic development	Countries, Cities, IEDA, USDA- Work with cities and counties to obtain funding and development plans	Infrastructure expanded and upgraded	Number of projects or miles of infrastructure expanded, number of improvements made	LT	Moderate-High
Partner with regional agencies to actively market the region in an effort to diversify the economy outside the agricultural sector	RT, WIAD- Inventory the region's existing businesses and determine which markets the region could support and market to those companies	Diversify the economy	New businesses locating throughout the region which were previously not represented, startups, number of businesses starting or expanding in non-ag industries	LT	Low
Provide assistance to new and existing small business owners	RT, WIAD- Provide funding, as well as technical assistance to local small business owners	Provide businesses with the resources necessary to start and continue to exist within the region	Number of small businesses staying in business, as well as expanding	OG	Minimal-Low
Provide sites with adequate infrastructure to accommodate the needs of diverse businesses	RT, WIAD, Cities, Counties, USDA, IEDA, Private \$- Assist communities with grants and the technical assistance necessary to develop the necessary infrastructure	Develop lots into shovel ready lots	Increased number of sites with the appropriate infrastructure	MT	High
Assist communities with implementing economic development strategies that will grow and attract businesses in targeted industry clusters	RT, WIAD- Assist individual communities in developing strategic economic plans, and provide technical assistance in implementing the plans	Expand the diversity of businesses located throughout the region	Number of new businesses locating within the region	MT	Minimal-Low
Identify opportunities to develop entrepreneurship programs and resources	WIAD- Closely monitor the region's economy and recognize when the need for a program and for more resources arises	Entrepreneurial businesses expanding and staying located within the region	Number of entrepreneurial businesses started, number expanded	MT	Low-Moderate

Goal #3: Increase and enhance the regional labor force

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Further develop training/apprenticeship opportunities with workforce partners, community colleges, high schools, and career academies	RT, WIAD, CSDs, CCs, ISU Extension- Work with schools to provide training course for basic job skills, assist employees who have been laid off	Develop a partnership with local educational facilities to improve the skills of the labor force	Start/expand training programs, students develop marketable job skills	LT	Low- Moderate
Identify training needs of incumbent workers and employers	WIAD- Consult with local businesses and employees to determine laborforce shortcomings	Develop specific list of training needs	Educators develop needs-based training programs	MT	Low
Build and expand relationships between local schools and businesses to introduce the youth to the opportunities available in the region	CSDs, CCs, WIAD- Bring businesses to schools to demonstrate local opportunity for students	Promote local career opportunities/ prevent out-migration	Employer/Educator summit	OG	Low
Expand the region's available workforce by attracting more people into the region's laborshed	RT, WIAD- Collaborate with local businesses to determine what kind of workers are needed and be able to market to those specific demographics/ skills	Expand the region's available workforce	Number of workers in the laborshed, regional companies growing and expanding	MT	Low
Identify successful entrepreneurial training programs and utilize the best practices of each	WIAD- Consult with local entrepreneurs to determine what trainings would be useful	Develop a list of specific training needs of entrepreneurs	Start/expand training programs, increase the number of entrepreneurs within the region	LT	Low
Diversify the region's workforce	RT, WIAD- Utilize diverse strategies to attract workers to the region	Diversifying the region's workforce to include a wide range of ages, economic backgrounds, and ethnic backgrounds	Outreach initiatives utilized to attract additional workers	LT	Low- Moderate

Goal #4: Secure, increase, and promote regional funding programs

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Secure access to additional capital for regional businesses	RT, WIAD, CCs- Find ways to access venture capital funds already available, or establish new local ones, secure funds for local and region RLF's	Increased amount of funding available for business, increased business growth/retention	Number of new sources of capital, number of businesses provided capital	LT	Minimal
Market existing programs to banks, cities, and development organizations	RT, WIAD, CCs- Continue Business Educator project, promote programs through e-newsletter and marketing materials	More awareness and utilization of available funding programs, increased opportunity for businesses to gain funds	Number of businesses getting assistance	OG	Minimal
Develop relationships with county foundations	RT- Research foundations that exist in or near the region, promote regional opportunities to them	Increase the amount of money being invested in the region while creating opportunities for foundations to become more involved in their communities	Number of foundations willing to invest in the region, number of projects funded	OG	Minimal
Identify venture capital firms and angel investors willing to invest in the region's projects	WIAD, RT- Gather information on potential funding sources/partners to work with	Increase level of startup capital available in the region, develop relationships with funds	Number of businesses funded by newly identified venture funds or angel investors	OG	Minimal-Low

Goal #5: Improve and expand major infrastructure networks

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Work to improve/expand underdeveloped regional highways- IA 44, IA 141, U.S. 30, U.S 59, & U.S. 71	Highway 30 Coalition, U.S. 71 Org., DOT, RT- Lobby state leaders for the importance of these roads, seek funding opportunities	Improvements for Highway 30, 59, 71, and 141	Secure funding for highway improvements	OG	High
Continue to advocate for the region's connection to a 4-lane highway	Highway 30 Coalition, U.S. 71 Org, DOT, RT, Cities, Counties- Advocate for the region's connection to a 4-lane highway to increase commercial/industrial opportunities	Regional connection to a 4-lane highway	Number of trips and meetings spent discussing the importance of the connection, having the region be connected to a 4-lane highway	LT	Minimal
Assist communities/ counties with infrastructure needs	RT, Cities, Counties, CDBG, IEDA, IDNR, IDOT, EDA, USDA, FEMA, Public \$- Prepare grants, provide technical assistance	Improvement of regional infrastructure, secure grant, and low interest loan funding	Number of infrastructure grants awarded, number of projects assisted	OG	High
Develop infrastructure, including utilities, that will lead to shovel-ready projects	RT, Cities, Counties, DOT, USDA- Prepare grants, provide technical assistance to ensure infrastructure is built to increase the chances of businesses locating within the region	New and comprehensive infrastructure built	New infrastructure constructed into previously undeveloped lots	LT	High
Develop broadband/ fiber infrastructure to all communities within the region	RT, Cities, Counties, IEDA, EDA, Private \$- Work with local providers to capitalize on funding opportunities to expand the broadband/fiber infrastructure network	Expanded broadband access within the community	New infrastructure constructed into previously under served communities	LT	High

Goal #6: Increase and market developed sites and available buildings

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Market existing available buildings	WIAD, Co. ED, IEDA- Utilize the LOIS system to put buildings online	Increased visibility of available buildings to potential businesses	Number of views regional buildings get from LOIS, number of inquiries, number of buildings sold	OG	Minimal
Continue to inventory existing sites and buildings through LOIS	Co. ED, WIAD- Work with developers to create lists	Up-to-date lists of available buildings and sites	Number of sites and buildings listed on LOIS	OG	Minimal
Prioritize and locate best regional locations for new buildings	WIAD, RT- Highlight most attractive locations in the region to give a good impression to viewers, promote locations to potential businesses	Improved perception of available buildings in the region	Number of buildings sold	ST	Minimal
Assist with the provision of adequate infrastructure for shovel ready sites	Counties, Cities, IDEA, USDA- Work with cities and counties to obtain funding and development plans	Increased likelihood of site selectors recommending shovel ready sites to developers	Number of shovel ready sites developed, number of sites purchased	LT	Low
Identify, market, and develop shovel ready sites	WIAD, Counties, Cities- Seek out and market already available shovel ready sites, promote the development of potential sites	Increased number of shovel ready sites	Number of shovel ready sites developed	OG	Minimal-Low
Encourage the development of ordinances to reduce businesses being utilized as storage or vacant	RT, Cities, Counties- Implement city ordinances which discourage private building owners from utilizing first floor business space for storage or leaving vacant	Increased number of available buildings for businesses to locate into	Number of ordinances implemented	ST	Low

Goal #7: Create a service sharing network for governments

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Encourage intergovernmental communication and cooperation between and among communities/ counties/organizations	Cities, Counties, RT- Seek opportunities to get governing bodies together to start a conversation about working together	Create a regional system used to inform counties of what is happening throughout the region	Communities communicating and cooperating on project which could benefit more than one jurisdiction	LT	Minimal
Identify potential linkages between communities	Cities, Counties, CCs, Cnty. Cnsvth, Co. ED, CSDs, RT, WIAD- Consult with all bodies which may have services or amenities which benefit their community and may be an asset to other communities	A database of the services, amenities, and needs of communities throughout the region	Number of linkages found and utilized	MT	Minimal
Promote service and equipment sharing between communities	Cities, Counties, CCs, Cnty. Cnsvth, Co. ED, CSDs, RT, WIAD- Evaluate the potential linkages and create a system which will make sharing services or equipment possible	Service and equipment sharing between cities and/ or counties to minimized costs	Number of services or equipment shared, amount of funding saved	LT	Minimal

Goal #8: Increase visitation, useability, and revenue at the region's tourist attractions

Task to be Implemented (Priority)	Lead Organization/ Implementation Plan	Intended Results	Evaluation Framework	Schedule	Cost Estimate
Identify strategies that enhance the livability of the region	RT, Cities, Counties- Consult with local citizens to create a strategic plan which would enhance the region and its amenities	Improve the perception of western Iowa, increase number of inquiries about and visitors to the region	Number of residents choosing to reside within the region, number of visitors to local amenities	OG	Minimal
Promote regional tourism opportunities	WIAD, Local Tourism Orgs.- Promote tourist destinations that tend to go overlooked, leverage with other destinations in the region to maximize visitor's time here and give more reasons to make the trip	Increased tourism site activity, more utilization of tourist sties in promotions	Number of visits to tourist sites, amount of outside revenue	OG	Low
Maintain and expand trail systems	RT, Cnty. Cnsvtn., DOT, DNR, Public \$, ENH- Identify potential areas for expansion, work with various stakeholders to develop plans	Development of new trails, expansion to connect trails, and improvement of current trails	Number of trail miles added and upgraded	LT	High
Work with local governments to improve water quality	Co. ED, Counties, NRCS- Promote environmentally safe agriculture practices, advocate for stricter water quality standards	Safe water in streams, rivers, and lakes; safe drinking water	Number of water contamination events, new regulations, continued safe drinking water	OG	High
Assist communities with funding applications which will enhance community amenities	RT, IDNR, DOT, ENH, Private \$- Seek funding opportunities and assist communities determine which opportunities would best fit their project	Increased number of identified funding programs, more opportunities for funding	Number of new sources found, number of projects funded	OG	Low
Assist communities with funding applications to help create year-round opportunities for tourism and recreation	RT, IDNR, DOT, ENH, Private \$- Seek funding opportunities and assist communities determine which opportunities would best fit their project/event	Increased funding for tourism opportunities, additional events created	Number of projects funded, additional number of events held	OG	Low

