

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

## INTRODUCTION

Successful Comprehensive Plans are built with the feedback of the community. As such, community engagement was a major component of this project and multiple methods were completed. The public input process was structured to allow stakeholders to be involved in several ways throughout the process. Some key public input elements include:

- Communication Plan
- Advisory Team
- Key Stakeholder Interviews
- Special Event Booths
- Youth Participation Workshop
- Public Workshops and Open Houses
- Joint Workshops
- Public Hearings
- Surveys
- Project Website

Each stage of the public input process was successful in gathering meaningful feedback. There was high turnout at public meetings and a large number of residents completed the online survey.

## SPECIAL EVENT BOOTHS

One of the most effective methods of obtaining input from a broad cross-section of the community was to meet with them at a community event or festival. Special Event Booths for this plan included a Comprehensive Plan booth at the Ankeny SummerFest Event on July 9, 2016, as well at a booth the Ankeny Farmer's Market on September 17, 2016.

The "My Hope for Ankeny" board shown on the top of the page highlights some of the community members willing to participate and show us what they wanted to see in Ankeny in the future. Responses were diverse, but there were some common themes among the responses.

## PUBLIC INPUT FROM SUMMERFEST

Public comments from the board included the following:

- Mini golf \*\*\*
- Bowling alley \*\*\*
- Arcade \*\*
- Trader Joe's \*\*\*
- A mall\*\*

- Indoor tennis club
- An amusement park
- Gordman's
- Fewer banks
- Controlled sustainable growth
- More entertainment
- Free public Wi-Fi
- More hockey
- More trail connections
- Outdoor concert hall
- Smaller parks in N. Ankeny
- More parade seating
- Outdoor store
- New movie theater
- Winter activities (for teens)
- Health store
- Barnes & Noble
- Shuttle service to State Fair
- Skating rink
- Roller skating
- Ikea
- More bike trails on NE Side
- Swimming pools at both high schools
- Ice rink
- Hockey rink
- Old Navy
- A better downtown (Uptown)

## SPECIAL EVENT BOOTHS

Residents of Ankeny discuss the Comprehensive Plan with Confluence and City Staff at the Farmer's Market and SummerFest events in summer 2016



- More housing options
- Another dog park
- A Hickory Park
- Roller skating rink
- Costco
- No sprawl
- Outlet mall

\* Indicate the number of times a response was repeated.

## ANKENY FARMER'S MARKET

The Ankeny Farmer's Market served as a prime location to obtain valuable and meaningful public input. At this event, visitors had the opportunity to learn more about the purpose of the plan, provide their ideas on a comment sheet, sign up for updates on an email list, receive a flier with a link to the project website and survey, add their picture and ideas to the "My Hope for Ankeny" board, and illustrate what their ideal future would look like.

Overall, the community was very excited about this opportunity to learn more about the planning process, and to provide their own thoughts and ideas about the future of Ankeny

as it continues to grow.

### INPUT FROM THE FARMER'S MARKET

Additional public comments provided at the Farmers Market and added to the "My Hope for Ankeny" Board included the following:

- A big stand-alone YMCA
- An arcade
- More parks
- Skyzone
- Chuck-e-Cheese
- Aldi's
- Hobby Lobby
- Gordman's
- Ikea
- A recreational lake
- Movie theater
- Sidewalks along 36th Street
- A forest
- A splash pad
- Mini golf
- Vibrant, local Uptown
- Bowling alley
- Pool
- Mini golf
- Frisbee golf

- Doll store
- Dog-friendly coffee shop
- AAA baseball team
- Pool
- Churches
- Fire station
- Trader Joe's
- A dog park on the north side

This event enabled community members of all ages to provide their input. In addition to the "My Hope for Ankeny" board, there were other activities in which people of all ages and abilities could partake.

Several local children also stopped by the booth. Shown to above is one of the children drawing what they hope would be in Ankeny's future. This served as a great way for them to remain involved and have fun while learning about *The Ankeny Plan 2040*, as well as expose them to the planning process.

## BUS TOUR

Part of the comprehensive planning process for Ankeny included a bus tour of high-quality, planned communities similar to Ankeny in the

## BUS TOUR

Members of the CPAT discuss with Confluence staff the different density and design elements present in Maple Grove, Minnesota



Minneapolis-St Paul, Minnesota, region. The tour took place on November 4, 2016, and provided an opportunity for the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Team (CPAT) members to experience firsthand a variety of land use types and configurations that may influence the final land use plan and policies in Ankeny. The communities selected for the visit were:

- Excelsior & Grand, St. Louis Park, MN
- Arbor Lakes in Maple Grove, MN
- Centennial Lakes in Edina, MN
- Cobblestone Lake in Apple Valley, MN
- Spirit of Brandtjen in Lakeville, MN

Those in attendance included:

- Gary Lorenz, Mayor
- Bobbi Bentz, Council Member
- Kerry Walter-Ashby, Council Member
- Trina Flack, Plan and Zoning Commission Chair
- Glenn Hunter, Plan and Zoning Commissioner
- David Jones, City Manager
- Paul Moritz, Assistant City Manager
- Mark Mueller, Public Works Director

- Nick Lenox, Parks and Recreation Director
- Derek Lord, Economic Development Director
- Eric Carstens, Planning Administrator
- Eric Jensen, Planning and Building Director
- Amy Baker, Communications Manager

While exploring the selected communities, the attendees were provided with a booklet summarizing the locations and highlighting key features to observe during the visit. The key features that the committee members were instructed to observe included:

### Building Exteriors

- Building materials
- Building heights
- Wall & roof shapes
- Amount of clear glass
- Window locations
- Exterior lighting
- Building orientation

### Site Features

- Width of sidewalks
- Pedestrian circulation
- Mechanical/utility equipment screening

- Trash enclosures
- Cart corrals
- Parking location
- Vehicular circulation
- Exterior lighting
- Outdoor displays
- Plaza space
- Landscaping
- Focal points
- Open space

### Signage and Way Finding

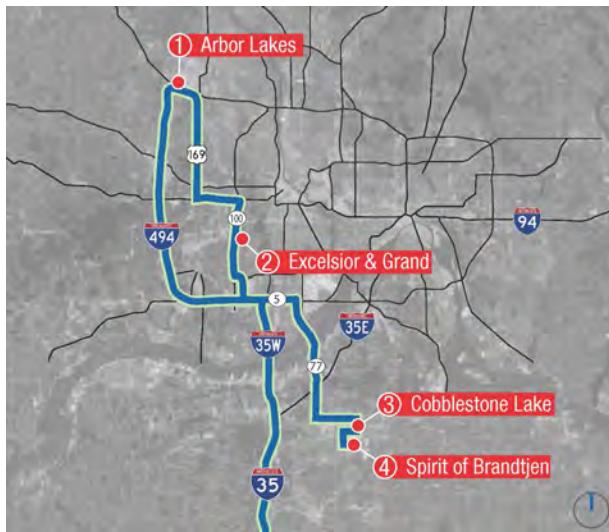
- Community boundary markers
- Interstate monument signage
- Gateway signs
- Primary intersection signs
- Community facilities and common area signs
- Wayfinding signage
- Streetscaping enhancements
- Trail signage

### Mix of Use/Transitions and Buffers Between Uses

- Architectural screen
- Vegetative buffer
- Physical distance

## BUS TOUR

The picture above outlines the trip route in the Minneapolis-St Paul metro trip. A sample of a question sheet from the booklet is provided on the right. Below, City Staff and the CPAT members present discuss the developments being reviewed.



## THINGS TO LOOK FOR AND CONSIDER DURING THE TOUR

As the bus tour proceeds through the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, you may see several things that might make sense for Ankeny now or sometime during the planning period.

Please take the time to write these down and or snap a photograph of what you like OR do not like. This will be instrumental in developing future policies on growth, design concepts, street layouts, landscaping, etc.

### Residential Use

What kinds of multi-family, if any, did you see that would be acceptable in Ankeny?

What do you like / don't like about the residential subdivision layouts seen during the tour?

Are there any special design features that should be established by policy recommendations in the new Ankeny plan?

- Mounded topography

### Storm Water Management

- Bio-cells
- Bio-swales
- Rain gardens
- Permeable hardscape
- Storm inlet signage
- Curb cuts

### QUESTIONS FOR THE RIDE UP

The booklet provided to attendees also included a section for readers to fill-out with answers regarding Ankeny during the ride to the Twin Cities.

The first question was, "What is your hope for Ankeny?" Responses mentioned desires for a more sustainable future with controlled growth, a robust utility and stormwater management systems, an efficient transportation network, and neighborhood revitalization. They wanted to keep vibrant, family-friendly nature of Ankeny and work to maintain/improve older sections of town in addition to the newer sections of town.

The second question was "What do you value

most about Ankeny?" Responses included the quality of life in Ankeny, the people of Ankeny, the excellent park system, the quality local government, the schools, safety, and the location.

The third question was "What Qualities of Characteristics make Ankeny unique?" The most common response was the quality of the park system and the trails, with particular mention of the High Trestle Trail. Another common positive attribute was the location of Ankeny to nearby communities and interstate access. Other qualities listed include the police and fire force, areas such as Uptown, the cleanliness of town, and the quality of the new infrastructure.

The fourth question was "What would you like to see most in Ankeny's future?" Several respondents listed an additional library as a future goal. Another common response was a commercial area near the interchange of Interstate 35 and 36th Street. Several people listed different types of entertainment activities they think would make Ankeny more of a destination. Other responses include the

revitalization of older neighborhoods in town, a natural specialty grocery store such as Whole Foods or Trader Joe's, and for Prairie Trail to be fully built out.

The final question for the ride up was, "Name something you feel could add or positively impact future growth and development in Ankeny." Responses varied, but many included recommendations for traffic alleviation including a new interchange at Interstate 35 and NW 26th St, adding four lanes to US-69, and strategic placement of high-speed arterial roads throughout town. Others saw the balance of commercial and residential land as an important part of growth in Ankeny. Many think more entertainment activity options and conference facilities would improve Ankeny, going along with the theme of making Ankeny more of a destination in the future.

### LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

Another section of the booklet asked attendees to note overall observations of what they did or did not like relating to Residential Use, Commercial and Mixed Uses, and Public/Open Space.



## BUS TOUR

The images below are some of the styles and density types of development viewed by the staff and CPAT members who attended the bus tour. A variety of development styles were sampled. The positive and negative impressions from each were collected.



Image Sources: SunSailor.Com, St Louis Park Historical Society, Trulia, Wikipedia, Minneapolis Northwest Tourism

General responses included:

- Mixed-use has potential, but would need to be careful with the location
- Dislike of the big homes on tiny lots
- More regional stormwater detention
- Liked the boulevard style and use of sidewalk space at Excelsior & Grand
- Like the three-story units with commercial on the bottom
- Liked the common areas included in the residential subdivisions
- Decorative street lights are nice
- A tree requirement for single-family homes would be nice
- Lakeville was a nice model for what we have to work with in Ankeny
- Liked the larger parks that served as destinations
- Tiered slopes and sloped areas were used to delineate the park areas from the surrounding uses

### EXCELSIOR & GRAND, ST LOUIS PARK

Some general comments made about the Excelsior & Grand development in St. Louis Park were that the multi-story residential

worked well here and that the parking was accommodating and out of view. They noted that the while the upscale and ground floor retail seemed to suffer some, the area was holding up well for its age. They also questioned what the turnover rate for the commercial uses were.

### ARBOR LAKES, MAPLE GROVE

Some general comments made about the Arbor Lakes development in Maple Grove were that while they liked the commercial buildings, they did not like the sidewalks only being on one side of the street. They also noted that while the lakes were pleasant, they seemed to lack public access points.

### COBBLESTONE LAKE, APPLE VALLEY

Some general comments made about Cobblestone Lake in Apple Valley were about the nice lots and houses, especially the unique house designs. However, they noted that the setbacks, especially side yard setbacks, would need to be wider in Ankeny. They also enjoyed the vertical relief, noting that it added to the visual aesthetics of the area. They worried the lack of street parking could be restrictive.

### SPIRIT OF BRANDTJEN, LAKEVILLE

A general comment made about the Spirit of Brandtjen in Lakeville was the quality of the house styles. However, they noted that the narrow streets and small lots can be restrictive. There was some concern over the lack of street parking and the minimal street lighting. They also wondered who maintained the common areas. While they liked the housing areas, some noted that it felt very dense and confining.

### PUBLIC MEETING

A large part of the Comprehensive Plan is ensuring the community feel their voices, opinions, and values had been incorporated into the document. There are many ways to gauge public opinion so that their thoughts and beliefs influence the final document.

A big step in the public engagement process for *The Ankeny Plan 2040* was the first public meeting held on November 16, 2016. The meeting was designed to serve many purposes including providing an overview of the comprehensive planning process, a visual preference exercise, and a small group



## THE ANKENY PLAN 2040



### OPEN HOUSE

Attendees of the public meeting held on November 16, 2016, were greeted with a variety of informational poster boards. They were then directed to comment boards requesting their input on the best things about Ankeny as well as areas that need improvement. An example is shown to the right.

mapping exercise.

It was important for citizens to understand the importance of these decisions. The visual preference exercise and small-group mapping activity were creative ways in which community preferences and thoughts could influence the final comprehensive plan and future land use map.

The subsequent pages provide an in-depth overview of the public meeting. This open house was held at the Pinnacle Club of the Otter Creek Golf Club in Ankeny. The meeting occurred between 6:30-8:30pm. People began arriving around 6:00pm and there was a turnout of approximately 150-200 people.

### BOARDS AND PRESENTATION

Attendees were asked to sign-in and provide their e-mail address in order to keep them updated on the Comprehensive Plan. They were then provided with a key pad polling clickers for the visual preference exercise during the presentation. Attendees were encouraged to take and complete a comment card for additional feedback after the meeting.

Near the entrance to the meeting, there were several items for the community to browse and to provide input. There were several presentation boards outlining some of the data collected on Ankeny. The boards included information on the location of sewer lines, major streets, school districts, zoning districts, as well as the future land use map created for the *2010 Ankeny Comprehensive Plan*.

There were several comment boards available for communities to write their thoughts on the future of Ankeny. The four boards asked the following questions:

- My vision for Ankeny is...
- The best part of Ankeny is...
- My concern for Ankeny is...
- Ankeny needs more...

These boards were meant to serve as a way to outline a Strength-Weakness-Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis for the City of Ankeny. SWOT Analyses are a good means of identifying areas of concern in cities as well as identifying the parts of a city residents think are beneficial. This information can be used to

guide future decisions about the city and the Comprehensive Plan.

The themes present on the "My vision for Ankeny" board included:

- Top quality education
- Planning for sustainable growth
- Being a top community in Iowa
- Excellent parks and trails.

The themes present in "The best part of Ankeny" board included:

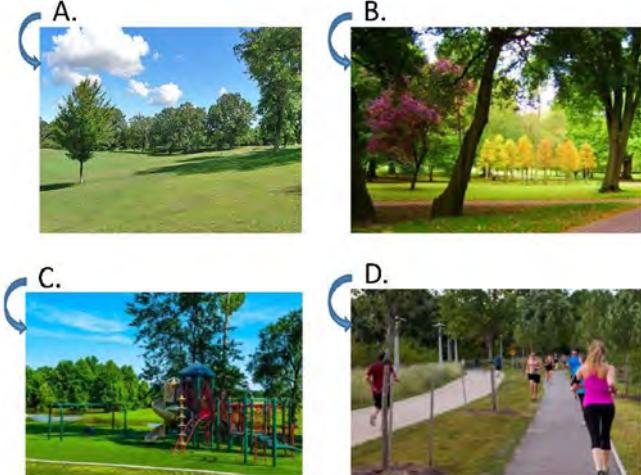
- Quality schools
- Parks/trail system
- Safety
- Location

The themes present in the "My Concern for Ankeny" board highlighted some division amongst the community in identifying the problems facing the city. Themes included:

- Too high density in some areas
- Traffic concerns
- Schools and growth
- "Just" a bedroom community



## GREENSPACE PREFERENCE



### OPEN HOUSE

Attendees took part in a visual preference exercise. An example of the type of question asked is in the right-hand corner above. Using clickers handed out by the door, real-time results on questions relating to the most preferred or not preferred development and density styles were provided. Full results of the visual preference exercise are provided in the appendix.



- Losing sense of community/growth
- Need more business/tax base

The final board asked for comments on the prompt, "Ankeny needs more". The common themes present on the board include:

- More retail/mall/higher-end amenities to match the income
- Better public transportation/light-rail to Des Moines/Ames
- Hospital
- Movie theater/bowling/ice rink
- Community Space/Theater
- More trails/parks (especially on north side of town)
- More senior citizen activities
- Low-density residential

### PLANNING 101

The first part of the evening included a presentation that went over the project schedule including major deliverable dates and a summary of the Comprehensive Planning process. The audience was provided with information about the reasons for and components of a Comprehensive Plan, and a

discussion on the importance of engaging the community were also covered.

Preliminary data from Phase 1 of the planning process was discussed. This data included information on population change, construction trends, income, the distribution of residents, employment, and retail opportunities in the Ankeny and Greater Des Moines area.

### VISUAL PREFERENCE EXERCISE

In an effort to determine the preferred densities and land use styles of Ankeny residents, a visual preference exercise was performed. Using keypad polling clickers handed out at the sign-in welcome table, audience members were polled and able to see group results in real-time. The type of densities and land use types polled on:

- Single-family dwellings
- Townhomes/row houses
- Multi-family units
- Mixed-use
- Retail
- Office
- Industrial

- Greenspace and parks

The participants were given either six or four different visual examples of a density and land use type. They could then vote on their most and second-most preferred option, depending on the question. In many instances, a clear preference was identified by the attendees. In other cases, two or more styles were preferred and one or two strongly not preferred. Results from the polling exercise were uploaded to *The Ankeny Plan 2040* website for review by those unable to attend. All options and responses are in Chapter 14: Appendix.

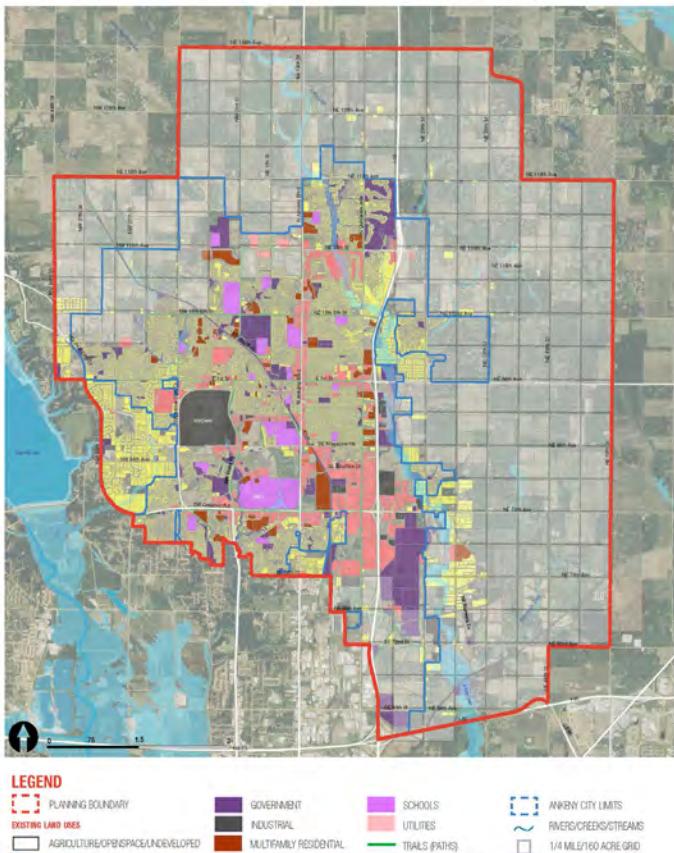
### INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

The first few questions provided practice on handling the voting devices as well as to gain some basic demographic information. First, the group was asked how many of them lived in Ankeny. Of the 150 respondents, 129, or approximately 86%, lived in Ankeny.

The next question was how long they had lived in Ankeny. The majority of residents, 56%, had lived in Ankeny for between 11-20 years. The next largest representative group was those who had lived in Ankeny for 1-5 years who

## FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING EXERCISE

Determining future land use in Ankeny



### SMALL GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE

The final portion of the public meeting had the attendees split into ten groups to complete a small group mapping exercise in which they assigned future land use values to parts of the planning boundary growth area.



accounted for 28% of the total respondents. The remainder of the attendees had lived in Ankeny for less than 1 year or from between 6-10 years.

The final introductory question asked the respondent's reason for choosing to live in Ankeny. The possible responses and for them to pick the best answer for were:

- Proximity to Work (33%)
- Quality of Public Schools (31%)
- Cost of Housing (7%)
- Near family/friends (17%)
- Raised here (12%)

Given Ankeny's proximity to job centers like Des Moines and Ames the proximity to work was not surprising. Neither was the quality of public schools due the family-friendly nature of Ankeny and the high number of single-family homes located in Ankeny.

### SMALL GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE

During the public meeting, the attendees were

informed about the importance of the future land use map in the Comprehensive Plan. After the visual preference exercise, the final portion of the meeting was a small group mapping activity. The activity was meant to gain input on their preferred future land use map.

The community members present divided into ten groups to develop their desired future land use map. Each group's table had an instruction guide, a base map of Ankeny and the planning area, as well as several different puzzle pieces representing different land use types.

The base map made for the exercise showed the city limits of Ankeny, the planning boundary of the Comprehensive Plan, parcel outlines, and existing land uses along with some identifying and helpful features such as streams, flood hazard areas, and major streets. A half-mile grid was placed over top of the undeveloped and agricultural land existing beyond the current city limits of Ankeny. This was the area which citizens were asked to help plan.

Puzzle pieces representing approximately 40

acres of land were created for the following land uses: single family residential, medium-density residential, high-density residential, mixed-use, commercial, office, industrial, and park space. Larger puzzle pieces representing approximately 160 acres of land were available for single-family residential units, park space, and industrial land.

Group members were instructed to work together to decide where they thought different future land use types should occur. The group did not have to complete all of the grid boxes. All land in the grids not filled in were determined to be best suited to remain agriculture/open space.

### GROUP MAPPING TAKE AWAYS

The results of the group mapping activity were insightful into the vision the community members present had for their city.

### Key Takeaways

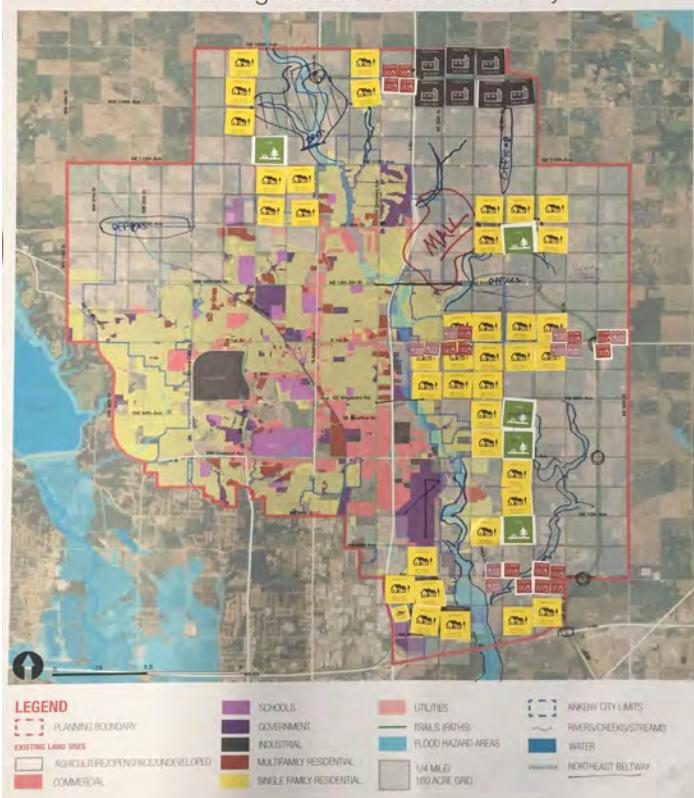
- Most groups left much of the planning boundary area undeveloped. It is unclear

## SMALL GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE

Below are images of the completed future land use maps from two groups formed at the public meeting. A complete set of completed future land use maps from the public meeting is provided in Chapter 14: Appendix.

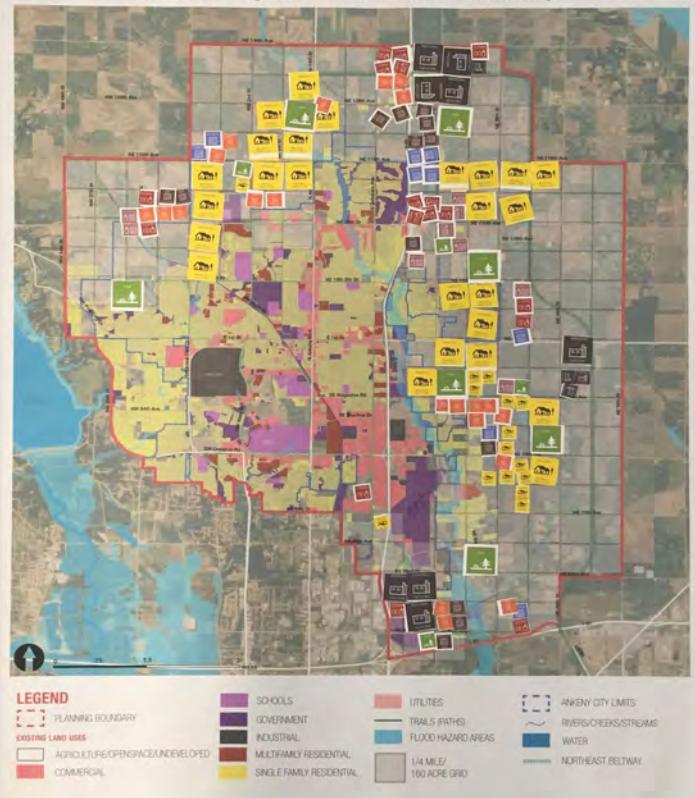
### FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING EXERCISE

Determining future land use in Ankeny



### FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING EXERCISE

Determining future land use in Ankeny



whether this was because they thought it should remain agricultural, ran out of time/ideas, or because they were overwhelmed by the size of the planning boundary. Many members of the public expressed concern over the growth rate, however, so the blank grid spaces may indicate they do not want Ankeny to grow that far out.

- Many groups placed more high intensity commercial district near the interchange of Interstate-35 and 110th Ave/NE36th St. Most groups placed at least some of their office, mixed-use, commercial, high-density residential, and medium-density residential land uses around this section of the planning boundary.
- Many groups placed some industrial land use in the planning boundary with it almost exclusively limited to the far northeastern section of the planning boundary near Elkhart's city limits, and the south/southeast sections of the planning boundary near Interstate 80 and Altoona. There were also some groups who identified the area around the proposed Northeast Beltway as a good

place for industrial land.

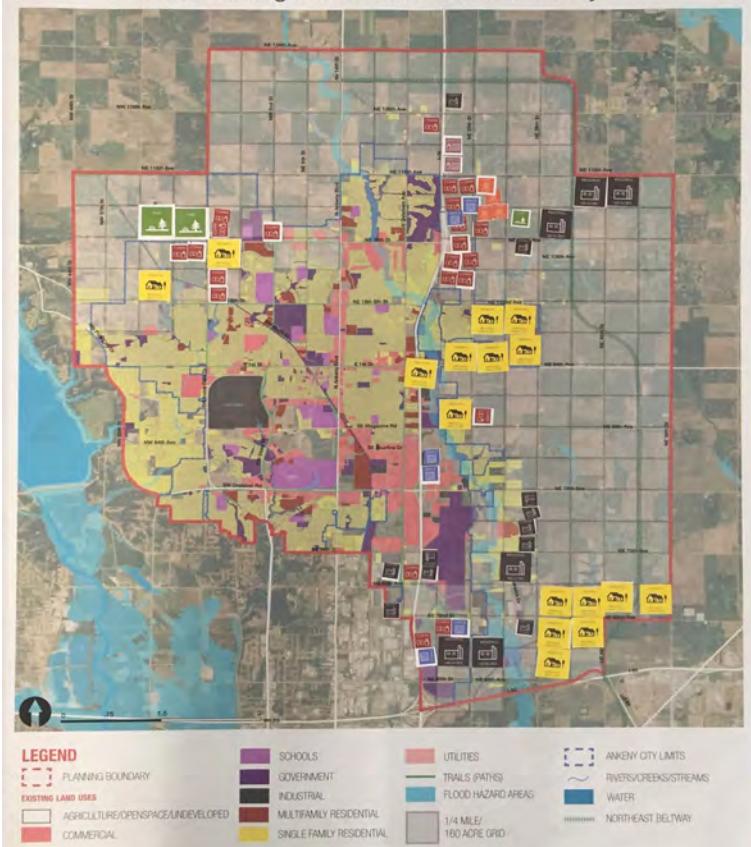
- Only a few groups identified locations suitable for high-density and medium-density residential land uses. The groups providing locations for these categories did so primarily in the northwestern section of the planning boundary, the interchange of Interstate-35 and 110th Ave/36th St, and some scattered throughout the southern, eastern, and northern parts of town.
- Most of the office land use category was placed near the interchange of Interstate 35 and 110th Ave/36th St. Other groups tended to cluster the office uses in the southern and north western areas of the planning boundary.
- Beyond the commercial district identified around the interchange of Interstate 35 and 110th Ave/36th St, other commercial areas identified by the groups were in the northwestern, north, and eastern sections of town, also near the interstate.
- The mixed-use land use category was predominantly placed in the commercial

district desired along the interchange of Interstate 35 and 110th Ave/36th St. as well as in the northwestern section of town, near the High Trestle bike trail. There were some scattered areas of mixed-use in the southeast and northern sections of the planning boundary as well.

- Single-family residential was the most popular residential land use category in the small-group activity. The main two areas groups placed single-family developments, almost exclusively in the larger 160 acre amounts, were in the eastern sections of the planning boundary and the northwestern section of the planning boundary. These were mainly in close proximity to the existing city limits and tended to be clustered in larger groups. There were also some groups where single-family residential land uses were placed in the southeast and northern sections of the planning boundary.
- Parks were a very popular land use category used by the groups. There were significant park land use areas identified by all the groups throughout the entire planning boundary, but

## FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING EXERCISE

Determining future land use in Ankeny



it was especially popular in the northwest section along the High Trestle Trail, the southwest near the Muchikinock Creek, the northern area near Four Mile Creek, and the eastern side scattered among residential land uses. Analysis of the maps clearly indicate many would like to see a large regional park and/or agricultural reserve in north Ankeny near Four Mile Creek.

- One common thread among the maps was the idea of taking advantage of existing trails and natural features like the High Trestle bike trail. Residents imagined a mix of park and mixed-use land uses along the trail to both preserve land and take economic advantage of the popularity of the trails.
- Many in the community identified a mall shopping center as a possible benefit to the community. This sentiment is supported also by the online survey.
- Multiple groups requested additional libraries be built not only in the undeveloped parts of the planning boundary, but also within the existing city limits.

Larger images of the small-group mapping activity results are in Chapter 14: Appendix.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Team (CPAT) and City staff helped identify key stakeholders in the community. Meetings were set up between the consultant and the identified stakeholders. During these meetings, the Comprehensive Plan process was described to the individuals and they were able to offer their unique perspectives on issues. There were a wide variety of stakeholders identified and interviewed.

These meetings identified a diverse set of views on the future of Ankeny, but there were many areas of consensus about the vision needed for the community to continue to succeed.

Many interviewed highlighted the need for a growing job base in the city and a need to attract employers to keep up with the residential demand for services. Others highlighted the need for an increase in diversity in the housing stock.

## AEDC MEETING

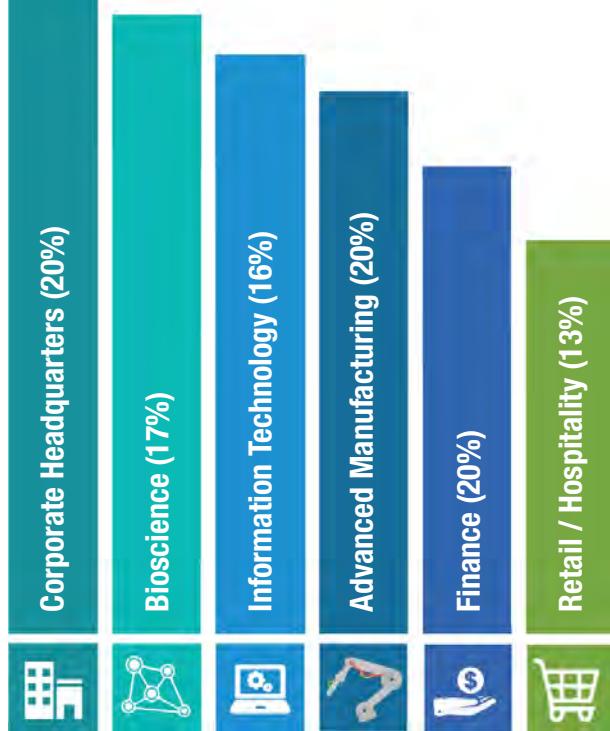
A meeting with the Ankeny Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) was held on December 15, 2016. The agenda for the meeting included:

- Planning 101
- Project schedule overview
- Preliminary data
- Polling questions

The Planning 101 presentation covered the importance of the Comprehensive Plan.

An overview of the public input exercises was provided and included a summary of some preliminary results from the online survey. This included responses about quality of life, reasons for living in Ankeny, and some data on shopping and dining habits of respondents. The attendees then had preliminary data from the economic conditions of Ankeny presented to them. This included information on growth rates, residential statistics, demographic data, employment data, and a retail leakage/surplus analysis.

## AEDC MEMBERS BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES ARE *MOST NEEDED* IN ANKENY:



## ANKENY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MEMBERS BELIEVE ANKENY NEEDS MORE:

1

**Skilled Workers (21%)**

2

**Business Park / Industrial Space (19%)**

3

**Retail Space (19%)**

### POLLING QUESTIONS

Questions were asked about Ankeny's attributes, strengths, and weaknesses.

The first question was "What is the best thing about Ankeny?" and they were allowed to make one selection.

- A. Business Climate (12%)
- B. People that live in Ankeny (23%)
- C. Proximity to Ames/Des Moines (26%)
- D. Small-town feel (18%)
- E. Schools (20%)
- F. Weather (0%)
- G. Other (2%)

The second question was "Ankeny needs more..." and they were allowed to pick three responses.

- A. Retail Space (19%)
- B. Industrial Jobs (15%)
- C. Skilled Workers (21%)
- D. Residential Housing Options (10%)
- E. Parks and Open Space (12%)
- F. Business Park/Industrial Space (19%)
- G. Other (4%)

The third question was "My top concern for Ankeny is..." and the respondents were allowed to pick one selection.

- A. Growing too fast (25%)
- B. Not growing fast enough (2%)
- C. Not enough retail/commercial uses (33%)
- D. Not enough parks (5%)
- E. Too many residential housing options (10%)
- F. Too few residential housing options (8%)
- G. Other (17%)

The fourth question was "What should be the target industries in Ankeny?"

- A. Advanced Manufacturing (15%)
- B. Bioscience (17%)
- C. Retail/Hospitality/Leisure (11%)
- D. Financial Services (13%)
- E. Logistics (6%)
- F. Information Technology (16%)
- G. Corporate Headquarters (20%)
- H. Other (2%)

### YOUTH WORKSHOP

Engaging Ankeny youth in the Comprehensive Plan process is important because they will

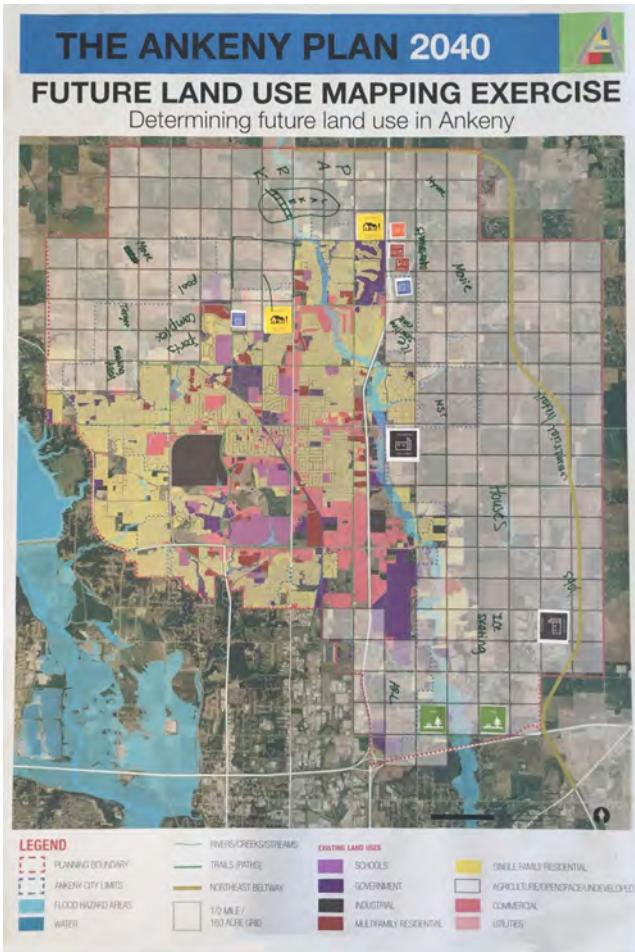
be making decisions about where to live in the future. A youth workshop was planned to gauge the interest and excitement of the young people of Ankeny.

On January 4, 2017, a youth workshop was held with members of the Mayor's Youth Council in Ankeny. The Mayor's Youth Council is composed of 15 high school students from Ankeny serving as volunteer representatives to advocate on behalf of Ankeny's youth. These students meet bi-weekly and are well-informed on the needs and conditions facing Ankeny.

The Mayor's Youth Council were given a presentation about the Comprehensive Plan process and described the important role of zoning in the planning.

### POLLING QUESTIONS

During the presentation, students were asked a series of questions using the turn key clicker technology to get results in real time. The first question was about their plans after graduation. Approximately 91% of the students were planning to attend a 4-year



**MOST OF THE YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS AGREED THAT MORE WINTER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES WERE NEEDED IN ANKENY**



college/university. The remaining 9% were planning on attending a community college, vocational school, or apprenticeship.

The next question was "Where do you see yourself in 10 years?" Unfortunately, none of the students selected "Living in Ankeny" as their response. Of the eleven students present, two saw themselves living outside of Ankeny but in Central Iowa and nine saw themselves living outside of Iowa.

When the students were asked what their ideal place to live was, there was some more diversity in their responses.

- A. Suburban community like Ankeny (5%)
- B. An city like Des Moines or Kansas City (18%)
- C. A major city like Chicago or New York (27%)
- D. In a rural area or on a farm (9%)
- E. Other (0%)

When asked about their favorite part of Ankeny, most selected its proximity to Des Moines/Ames or the schools as their preferred responses. Others favored the small-town feel and parks.

Students were then asked to identify what Ankeny needed most to improve. There was significant consensus on this question, with 90% of the students selecting either more shopping options or more entertainment activities. A few other students also selected more restaurants.

The final question asked the students to think about their least favorite thing about Ankeny. The responses varied.

- A. Traffic (19%)
- B. Growing too fast (10%)
- C. Lack of Entertainment Options (48%)
- D. Limited Number of restaurants (14%)
- E. Other (10%)

During the group polling questions, the small size of the group enabled more direct conversation with the students to expand on their responses to the questions. This provided a more nuanced look into their responses. For instance, while many stated that they were pleased with the availability of park and recreation activities in Ankeny, many agreed that activities were more limited during the

winter months. They felt as if more winter-based outdoor and indoor activity options for recreation such as ice-skating or skiing and bowling would be a good addition to Ankeny.

In general, a lack of entertainment options available in Ankeny was a noted negative aspect of life in Ankeny. Many of the students mentioned that they often have to drive to either Ames or Des Moines to shop, go bowling, or see a movie. They also mentioned that while Ankeny has plenty of fast-food restaurants, there was a distinct lack of nicer, sit-down style restaurants.

**GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE**

The final part of the meeting was a small-group mapping exercise, the same one performed at the public meeting in November 2016. The students made several recommendations:

- Many students suggested a mall or retail commercial district near the interchange of Interstate 35 and 110th Ave/36th St.
- The group believes a large, regional serving park space in the northern section of the

## THE YOUTH COUNCIL'S LEAST FAVORITE THING ABOUT ANKENY:

Lack of Entertainment Options (48%)

Traffic (19%)

Lack of Restaurants Options (14%)

Growth (10%)



## MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL AGREE ANKENY NEEDS



**BOWLING**



**MOVIE THEATER**



**INDOOR / OUTDOOR  
SWIMMING POOL**

## MORE ENTERTAINMENT OPTIONS

planning boundary would be ideal. Many suggested a man-made lake would be a welcome addition to the park space.

- They envisioned additional single-family housing located east of the existing city limits between Interstate 35 and the proposed Northeast Beltway to the east.
- They located additional employment centers along the proposed Northeast Beltway.
- The students suggested expanding the Prairie Ridge Sports Complex located in the northeastern area of town
- The students want additional entertainment options including pools, movie theaters, and ice-skating rinks.

## SURVEY

Residents were encouraged to provide feedback through a community input survey. This allowed them to voice their thoughts regarding what they enjoy about the city along with what improvements they feel would be a positive impact as Ankeny continues

to experience growth. Feedback obtained through the survey process will aid in yielding outcomes that more accurately reflect the wants and needs of community members and will help to reflect which areas of focus Ankeny residents view as most important.

The survey opened on August 8, 2016, and was available until December 31, 2016. Overall, there were 3,717 visitors to the survey website. Of those visitors, 61%, or 2,295 people, went on to complete the survey.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

A complete list of survey questions and response summaries is provided in the Appendix of the report. While all of the answers provided some insight into the opinions and beliefs of residents in Ankeny, some key takeaways have been summarized below:

#### Who completed the survey

Of the over 2,000 people who completed the survey, 98% were residents of Ankeny. While the length of time lived in Ankeny varied significantly, 87% of the respondents lived in a single-family home and 93% of respondents lived in owner-occupied units. The majority

(66%) of survey respondents were 25 to 44 years old.

#### Ankeny Quality of Life

The survey responses suggest Ankeny residents are overall satisfied with the quality of life in Ankeny. Approximately 98% of respondents rated their quality of life as either Excellent or Good. When asked about the expected future quality of life, respondents generally expected the quality to either get better (41%) or stay the same (34%).

#### Housing

By far, the most needed housing types identified by survey takers were entry-level single-family houses (51%) and mid-range single-family houses (63%). A majority (61%) of respondents do not believe Ankeny needs more affordable multi-family housing, however, some (45%) would like to see a broader range of housing choices.

#### Commercial

Respondents indicated that commercial activities such as expanded retail stopping options and more community events/things to

## SURVEY

The word cloud to the left shows the most common words used to describe Ankeny by survey respondents. It becomes clear from the word cloud that Ankeny residents who responded to the survey have generally favorable views of Ankeny. The most common words used to describe Ankeny were growing, friendly, safe, family, and clean.



do would improve the quality of life in Ankeny. Specifically, sit-down restaurants, specialty grocery stores, department stores, and entertainment businesses were singled out as the most preferred retail option they would like to see in Ankeny. The most consensus was surrounding the need for entertainment options in Ankeny with 82% in favor of more retail, shopping, and entertainment businesses. Many residents, 84%, would like to see the Uptown District in Ankeny revitalized.

## Employment

Approximately 31% of respondents indicated that increased employment opportunities would increase the quality of life in Ankeny. The most support was for an increase in office development and employment opportunities with 80% in favor. There was less enthusiasm for industrial growth and development with only 38% support. In terms of the City's role in attracting jobs, 70% agreed that the city should "continue to plan and invest in future growth and development to expand size, population, and economy." However, only 45% believe Ankeny should commit tax dollars

to attract employment opportunities. Others, approximately 52%, are not sure if Ankeny is a good place to start a business while 42% believe it is a good place to start a business.

## Parks and Green Space

Approximately 1 in 5 respondents listed the availability of parks, recreation, and open space as one of the most important reasons for living in Ankeny. There was strong support for Ankeny needing more parks, recreation, and open space with 80% agreeing with the statement. In terms of protection of natural resources and the preservation of open space, another 76% support this goal. There is also agreement that Ankeny needs more sidewalks and trails with 79% saying they agree. Slightly less, 59%, believe Ankeny needs more bike lanes and routes.

## People like Ankeny

Overall, the respondents held largely favorable views of their City. The above word cloud shows the most popular words chosen to describe Ankeny by the survey takers. The larger the word, the more common the response. The largely positive responses are

consistent with the final results of the survey questions. Overall, people enjoy living in Ankeny and want to see the things that make Ankeny a great city continue to be supported.

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

A final public open house was held on December 12, 2017, to overview the full draft of *The Ankeny Plan 2040* to the community. The full draft had been created by City staff and the consulting team over the course of 2017 based on feedback, research, and analysis of the existing conditions in Ankeny and anticipated future growth. Each chapter had been reviewed by City staff and the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Team (CPAT) over eight meetings.

The open house was held from 4-8 p.m. at the Otter Creek Golf Course, Pinnacle Club. Residents were encouraged to stop by and review stations set up covering the contents of each chapter. City staff and members of the consulting team were available to take comment and answer questions relating to the chapter drafts or the Comprehensive Plan overall.

## OPEN HOUSE

A public open house to present the full draft of *The Ankeny Plan 2040* was held on December 12, 2017, at the Otter Creek Golf Course, Pinnacle Club. Over 130 people attended the meeting.



The six stations included:

- Station 1 - Chapter 2: Public Participation, Chapter 3: Population + Growth, and Chapter 10: Economic Development
- Station 2 - Chapter 5: Housing, Chapter 7: Community Facilities, and Chapter 11: Hazards
- Station 3 - Chapter 4: Environment and Chapter 6: Parks + Recreation
- Station 4 - Chapter 8: Infrastructure
- Station 5 - Chapter 13: Transportation
- Station 6 - Chapter 9: Community Character and Chapter 12: Land Use

There were copies of each chapter at each station and two full drafts printed and available for review. Each station had a comment card specific to each station. There was also an overall comment card.

Over 130 people attended the open house and provided their feedback. The comments and feedback provided at the open house were

gathered and presented to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Team (CPAT), along with a series of recommended changes to the draft chapters based on the feedback.

Following the public open house, the station boards and the full *The Ankeny Plan 2040* draft was added to the project website and available for download. Visitors to the website were encouraged to leave a comment on the website or send an e-mail to the Director of Planning and Building, Eric Jensen.

A summary of the feedback was presented to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Team (CPAT) in January 2018.