ROLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2023

CITY OF
ROLAND IOWA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is an official document that guides the physical, social, and economic development of a city. The plan envisions both short and long term aspirations of a community while offering a direction for decision makers and investments. The needs and desires of community members help shape the framework of a plan and what processes must be followed to support specific goals.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research collected by Iowa State University's Community and Regional Planning studio class, a list of goals and recommendations was compiled for the City of Roland to follow. The purpose of the goals and recommendations is to provide a roadmap for Roland's future development while keeping the cherished values of quality of life and a sense of community.

Four main goals were identified to address community concerns and steer future development:

GOAL 1: Promote economic development by revitalizing the downtown, and by providing suitable buildings and sites for commercial and industrial development.

GOAL 2: Encourage steady housing development to accommodate expected future population growth.

GOAL 3: Continually improve infrastructure and public services to enhance safety and quality of life.

GOAL 4: Preserve and enhance the small-town character of Roland.

In order to achieve the defined goals, the following five actions are recommended:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Adopt the 2023 Roland Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Update Zoning Ordinance and map to reflect the future land uses and desirable development patterns.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Reactivate and energize city boards –pool, park, library, planning & zoning, board of adjustment and regional economic development partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Conduct conversations with downtown landowners, such as Key Cooperative and the Library Foundation, regarding their future activities and land use needs.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Adopt simple design guidelines for downtown to maintain the historic character and provide modern flexibility.

PLANNING

PROCESS

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Roland was started by an undergraduate class from the Community and Regional Planning program at Iowa State University. A planning process was developed which focused on collecting data about the City of Roland and developing a citizen participation process.

Prior to work beginning on the plan, the planning team reviewed planning literature and theory, discussing the characteristics of a 'good' plan, the AICP code of ethics and professional practice, the previous Roland Comprehensive Plan (2007), and examining comprehensive plans from similar towns. Work on the plan started with the planning team meeting with the mayor and city staff for an introduction to Roland to understand community issues and concerns. With a better understanding of the town, the planning team developed a work schedule and divided into two teams: the citizen engagement, and the data collection team.

The data collection team researched information about the city such as community history, the natural environment, population, housing, economics, land use and community facilities and transportation. It was important to make sure that the key areas of research that aligned with standard planning practices, identifying the information that would shape the future development of the community. Data was collected and analyzed from a variety of sources including the 2020 U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Story County Reports and Plans, the State of Iowa, Iowa State Extension and Outreach, and city officials of Roland. From this the planning team was able to identify issues and this information also served to influence the work conducted by the citizen engagement team.

The final steps of the process were to take the data collected by Iowa State University student teams and provide the final review with input from the City of Roland's Mayor, City Council, City Staff and City Planning and Zoning Committee. Ames Economic Development Commission provided these final steps in the process and facilitated the combination all the different input before required public meetings.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

ROLAND MUSEUM

MEMORIAL DAY TO LABOR DAY
OPEN EVERY SUNDAY
HOURS: 1 TO 4 PM
OR BY APPOINTMENT

Over the last few decades, Roland has faced many changes. The railroad tracks were discontinued and eventually removed in 1977. The Praeri Rail Trail took its place four years later as a recreational corridor. A museum replaced the original schoolhouse in 1981. The public library originally opened in 1983, before moving to a larger site in 2010. Recreation areas have become more of a focus since the beginning of the 1990s. Jacobson Bear Creek Park was completed in 1992, and Britson Athletic Complex in 2013[1].

Due to the lack of local shopping opportunities with closures in the preceding decades, residents turned to the surrounding communities of Story City and Ames for their needs. However, life has remained enjoyable in Roland. The population consistently grew throughout the latter half of the 20th century and the 2020 Census saw additional growth, a rarity compared to most parts of rural Iowa currently.

Figure 1: *Roland 2020 Aerial View*

Source: Roland Sesquicentennial History Book Committee. (2020). Roland 1970–2020: Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future (Second Edition). Unpublished Manuscript.

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF ROLAND

The City of Roland is located in northern Story County; just three miles south of the Story-Hamilton County line. Interstate 35 runs three miles to the west of the city and is linked to Roland by E-18 (130th Street).

The City of Roland's position in the heart of the of the Ames MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) provides ample access to all amenities with rural Iowa community strengths. Most shopping can be done within 15 miles, or about a 25-minute drive. Additionally, these locations provide Roland residents with employment opportunities. Over half of the

residents work outside of city limits, with Ames and Story City being the primary locations of employment.
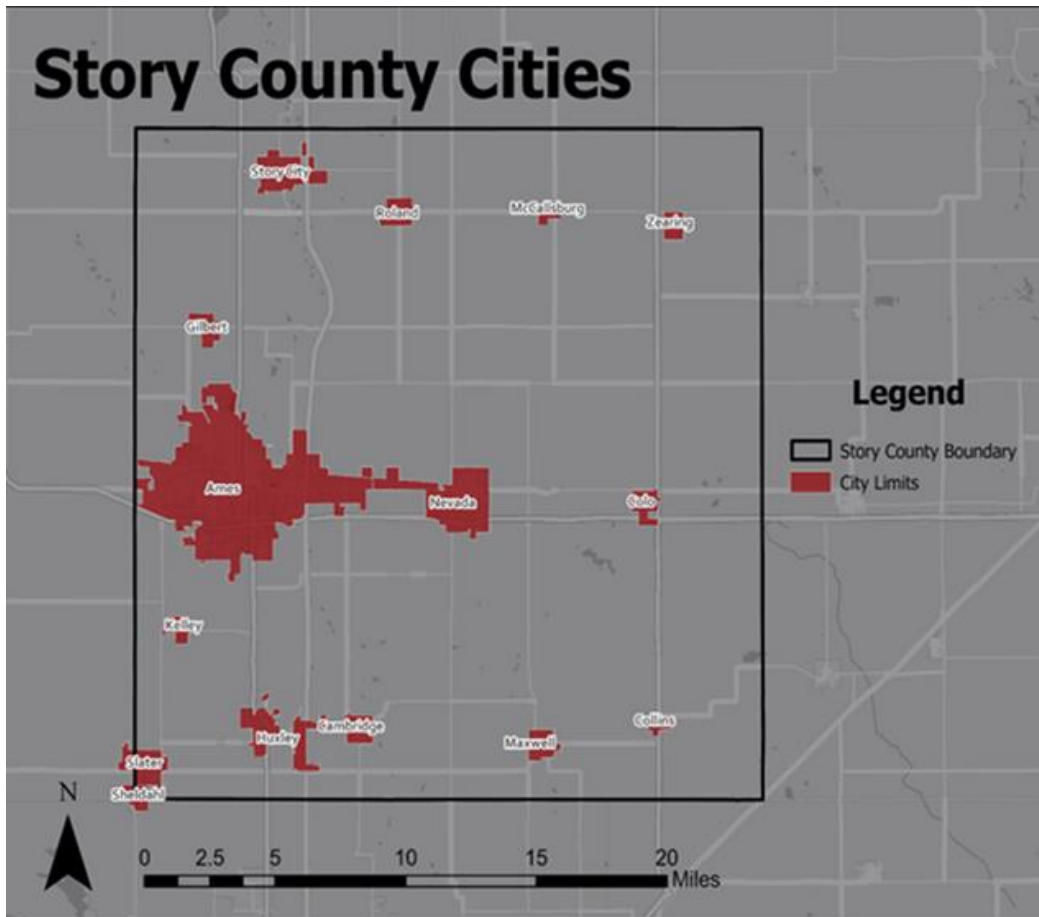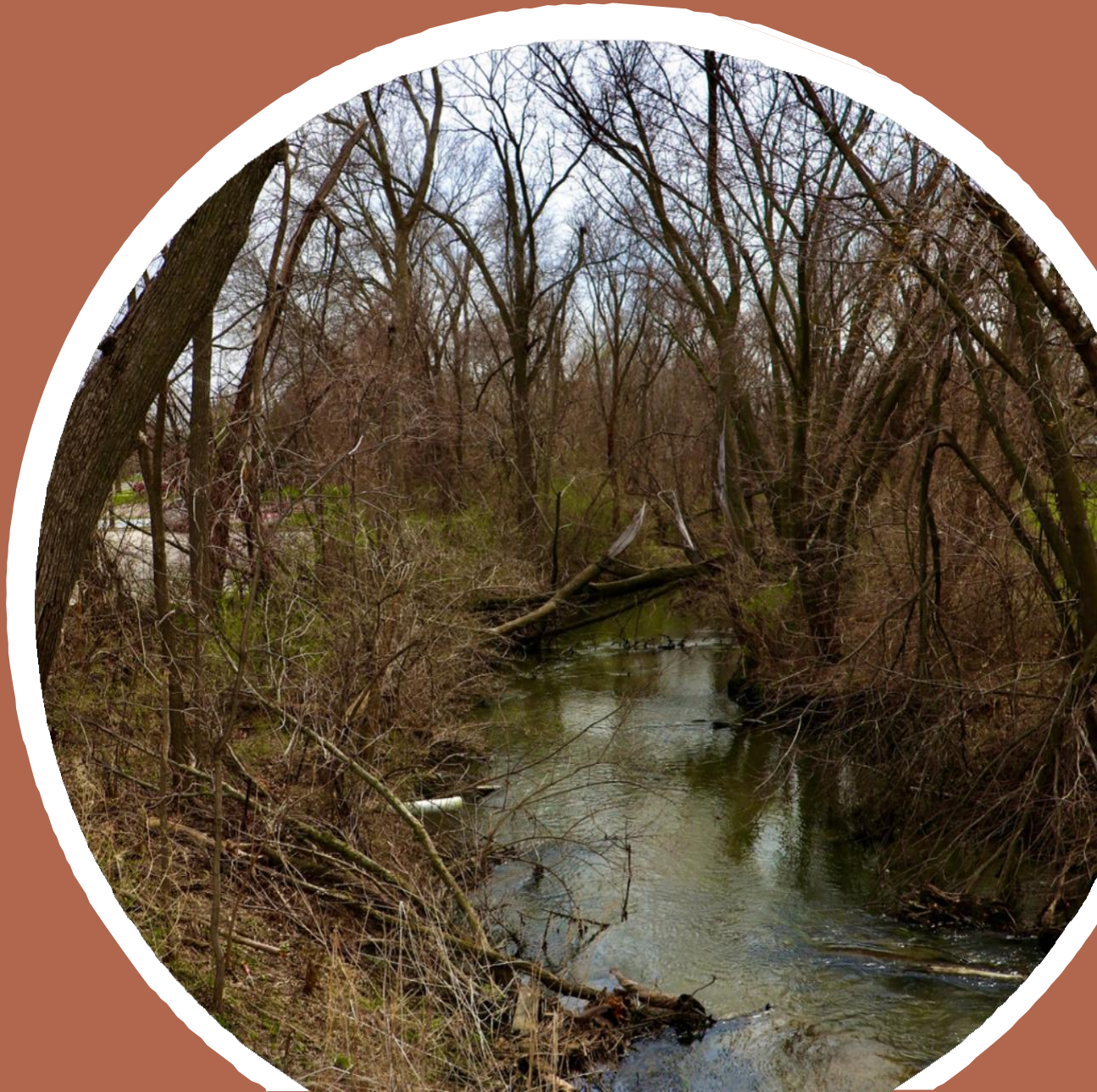

 Figure 1.2: *Story County Cities*

Source: Story County MAPS Committee. (2022, April 4). Interactive Maps & Geographic Data | Story County, IA - Official Website. Story County, Iowa GIS. Retrieved April 27, 2022, from https://www.storycountyiowa.gov/444/Maps-Geographic-Data

ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

Natural resources and environmental characteristics are vital to a community and impact the planning and decision-making process. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and aesthetic value to a community, the natural environment serves many functions. These functions include stormwater infiltration, preserving soil quality by reducing soil erosion, and shade from tree canopies to provide relief from the summer heat. The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about natural resources, ecological functions, natural hazards, and the recreational and aesthetic value of the natural environment found within and near the city of Roland.

PRAERI RAIL TRAIL

The Praeri Rail Trail is a former railway and was acquired by Story County in 1978. The spelling of the word "Praeri" pays tribute to the town's Norwegian heritage. Located at the northeast corner of town, the trailhead can be accessed at the corner of N. ParkStreetand National Street. The 10.5-mile crushed limestone and grass recreational trail stretch from Roland through McCallsburg to Highway 65 west of Zearing (see Figure 2.3). Residents and visitors can hike, bicycle, jog, and horseback ride on the trail, (though grass sections of the trail may only be suitable for mountain bikes). In the winter, the trails are open to cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling, while closed to other motor vehicles. Public hunting is allowed along sections of the trail not adjacent to city boundaries. Along the trail, are strung a series of remnant prairies.[1] Remnant prairie is precious in Iowa, as less than 0.1 percent of Iowa's original prairie landscape remains. This remnant prairie is bursting with native flowers, grasses, and forbs, creating a habitat for pollinators, pest-eating insects, and beautiful birds that birders can search for.

ROLAND WILDLIFE AREA

Located just northeast of town is the Roland Wildlife Area (see Figure 2.4). This 80-acre preserve is a mix of wetland and prairie habitats and was acquired by Story County in 2010. The preserve provides exceptional habitat for a variety of wildlife. Public hunting is also allowed at Roland Wildlife Area, though only non-toxic ammunition is allowed.[2]Roland Wildlife Area is a great site close to Roland for residents and visitors to experience wildlife or harvest game year-round and provides a place for migratory birds to rest and refuel during migration. As a result, it is an ideal location for birdwatching.

Wildlife present at Roland Wildlife Area includes marsh wrens, sparrows, swallows, warblers, waterfowl, pollinating insects like butterflies, moths, native bees, foxes, coyotes, deer, raccoons, rabbits, and bats. Wetland and prairie plants are also present at the site including milkweeds, goldenrod, purple coneflower, ironweed, Obedient plant, and other native wildflowers.

Figure 2.1: *Bicolored Striped Sweat Bee*
Source: Wiener, K. (n.d.). Bicolored Stripped Sweat Bee.

Figure 2.2: *Eastern Meadowlark*
Source: Brookens, D. (n.d).. Eastern Meadowlark.
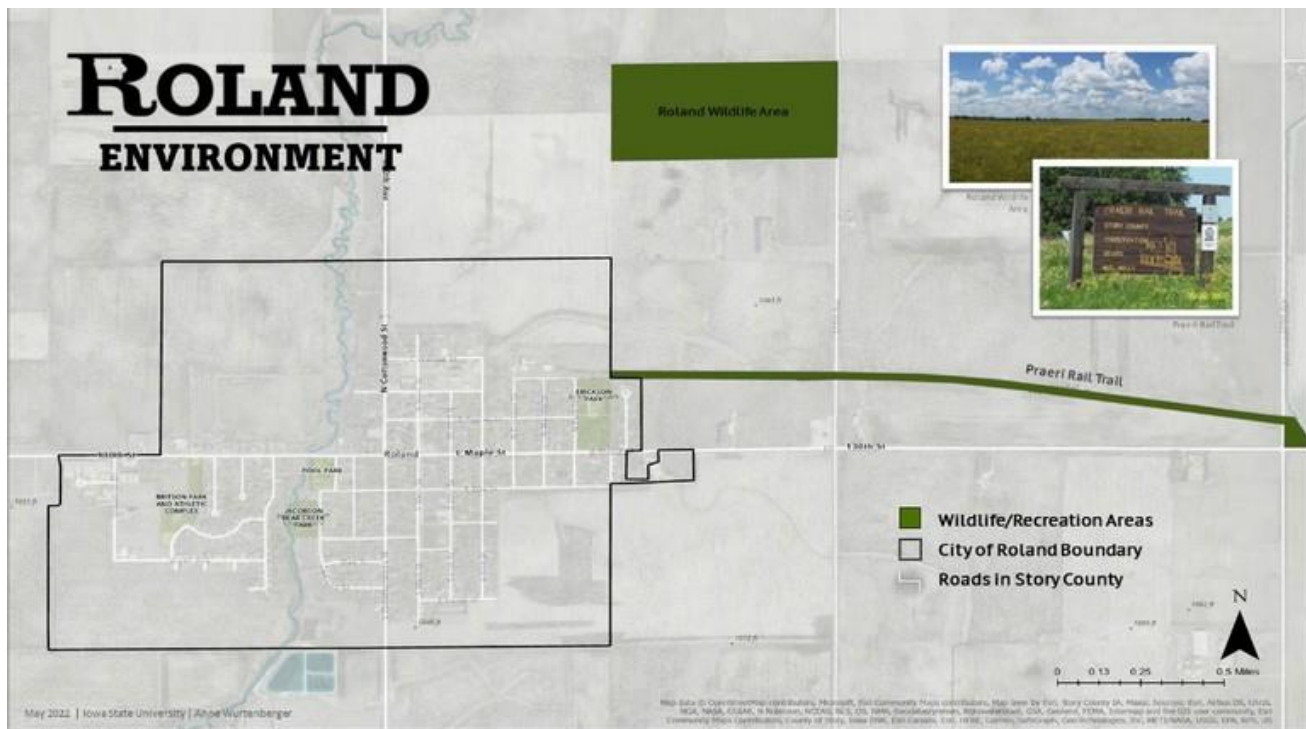
Figure 2.3: *Praeri Rail Trail and Roland Wildlife Area*
Source: Created by Author,
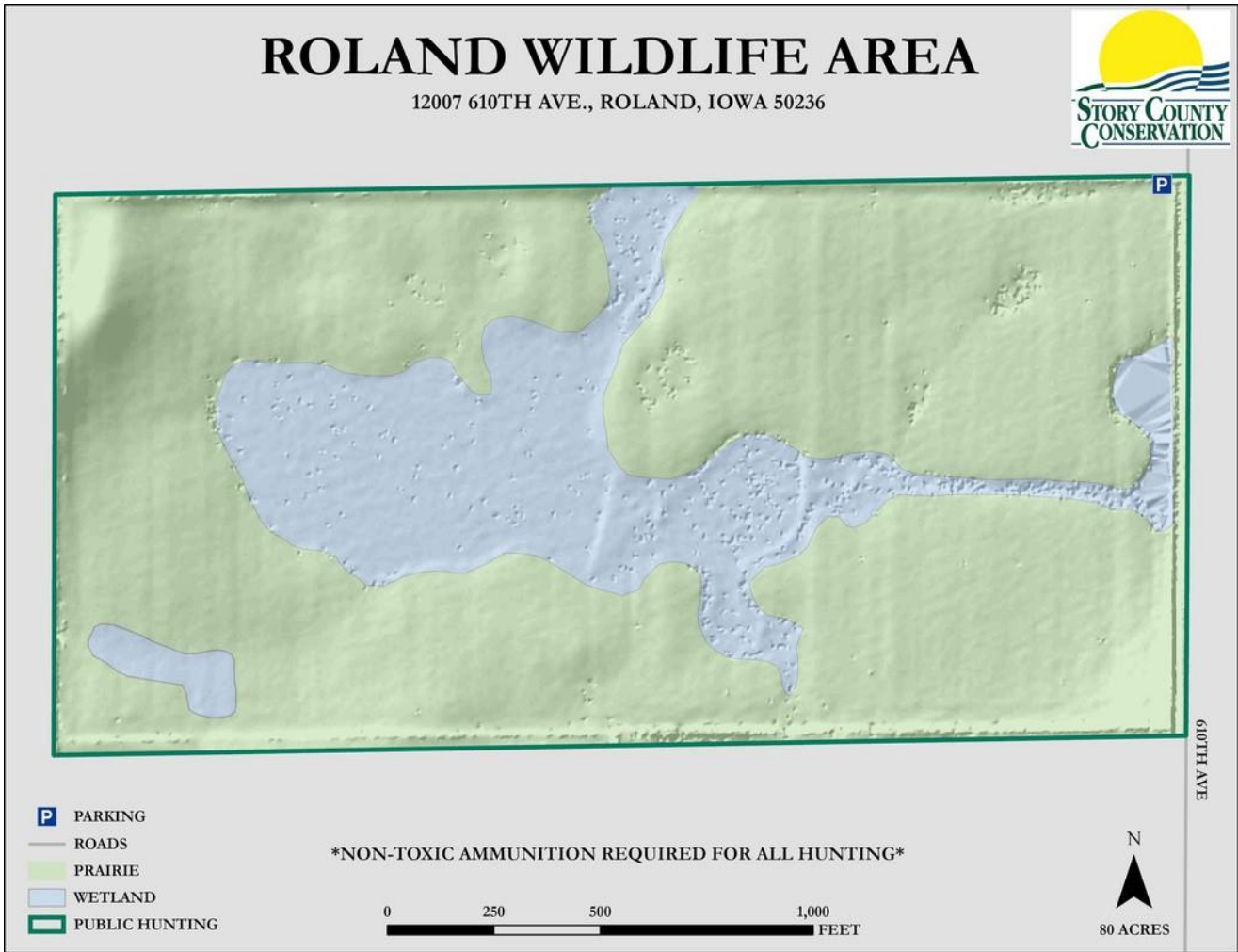
Figure 2.4: *Roland Wildlife Area*

Source: Story County Conservation.

FLOOD RISK

Two primary floodplains exist within Roland city boundaries. Roland has historically avoided construction in identified flood plains and is updated as information becomes available by Federal agencies. The main flood risk is posed by Bear Creek which runs north to south through town. A second flood threat is presented by a tributary of Bear Creek that runs diagonally through northeast Roland and with proper design and precautions development surrounding areas can be done diligently.

CONCLUSION

The natural areas within Roland and nearby county-owned properties provide a variety of recreational opportunities to residents of Roland. These areas also support a diverse array of plant and animal life, providing crumbs of habitat amidst a monoculture of row crops. These areas benefit the area by reducing soil erosion and enhancing both soil and water quality. Roland's city parks can be enhanced through ecological restoration to improve the quality of the wildlife habitat they provide, supporting even more species of plants and animals than they do currently. Jacobson Bear Creek Park is a prime candidate for ecological enhancement. Over the long run, the ecological enhancement would be a great investment in the well-being of these areas and ensuring they are ecological of the highest quality possible. Being good stewards of natural areas within Roland will allow the city to leverage these areas to attract new residents and provide a greater quality of life for residents of Roland now and in the future.

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[1] Informatics, I. (n.d.). Story. Praeri Rail Trail -Story, IA. Retrieved April 24, 2022, from https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Story/Park/Praeri-Rail-Trail.aspxhttps://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Story/Park/Praeri-Rail-Trail.aspx

[2] Roland Wildlife Area. Roland Wildlife Area | Story County, IA -Official Website. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2022, from http://www.storycountyiowa.gov/1516/Roland-Wildlife-Areahttp://www.storycountyiowa.gov/1516/Roland-Wildlife-AreaWiener,   K.   (n.d.).

[3] ArcGIS web application. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2022, from https://hazards-fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd

DEMOGRAPHICS

INTRODUCTION

The demographic data will be examined using the following five topics: population, education, housing, income, and future projections. A comprehensive understanding of Roland's demographic make-up is necessary to make relevant and applicable recommendations for current and future needs for the community.

Table 3.1: *Population of Roland from 2010-2020*

Year	Pop.
2010	1,284
2020	1,362

AGE AND SEX

Various age groups in the structure of a community often have different needs and require different services. A younger population (many children) would require childcare facilities or recreational services while an older population would require different housing or transportation needs. This would include independent living facilities and rideshare options.
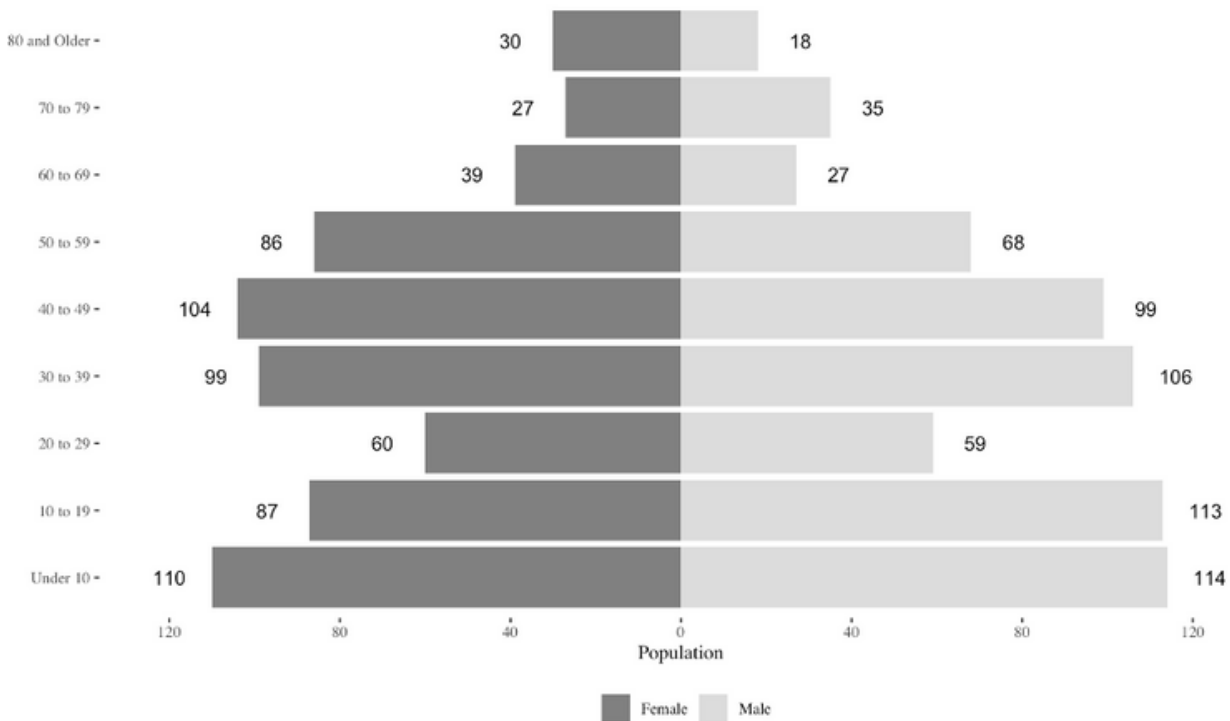
Figure 3.2: *Roland Population Pyramid, 2000*

Figure 3.3: *Roland Population Pyramid, 2010*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates (2010).

Comparing the population pyramids for both 2000 (Figure 3.2) and 2010 (Figure 3.3), there is a similar pattern to the population breakdown based on sex and age. From 2000 –2010 children under the age of 10 remained the largest distribution of the population concluding that Roland is a family community. This is due to the low cost of living, proximity to surrounding cities, good schools, and safe neighborhoods as identified in the community survey.

In comparison with Story County and the State of Iowa, looking at median age furthers our analysis. According to the 2020 ACS 5-year Estimates of median age by sex, the median age in Roland is 34.9, Story County is 26.8, and the State of Iowa is 38.3 years. The median age for the State of Iowa is a better comparison than that of Story County due to the fact that Iowa State University is located in Story County and its presence skews the median age towards a younger population.

DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment is tied closely to the population's social and economic characteristics. The relationship between income and educational attainment is explored further in the Income section of this chapter. Table 3.4 shows the historical educational attainment in the City of Roland. For the City of Roland educational attainment is an important indicator because it reflects the number of high school graduates which reflects a strong school system. Educational attainment also positively correlated with earning potential (income).

Table 3.4: *Educational Attainment Overtime*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates (2020).

Table 3.4 shows that overtime, educational attainment is increasing. This means more people are completing high school and pursuing higher education. The number of residents with a high school education has risen, those with some college has risen, and those with higher levels of education has fluctuated from 2000, 2010, and 2019. Figure 3.8 below shows Roland's educational attainment in comparison to Story County and the State of Iowa based on the 2019 ACS 5-year Estimates.

	2000	2010	2019
Less than High School	4.7%	3.5%	2.7%
High School education or equivalent	26.8%	24.2%	23.9%
Some College/Associate Degree	39.1%	33.3%	43.1%
Bachelor Degree or Higher	29.4%	39.0%	20.2%

bachelors degree or greater	29% 52% 30%
some college/associates degree	32% 29% 43%
high school or less	31% 17% 24%
< high school	7% 3% 3%
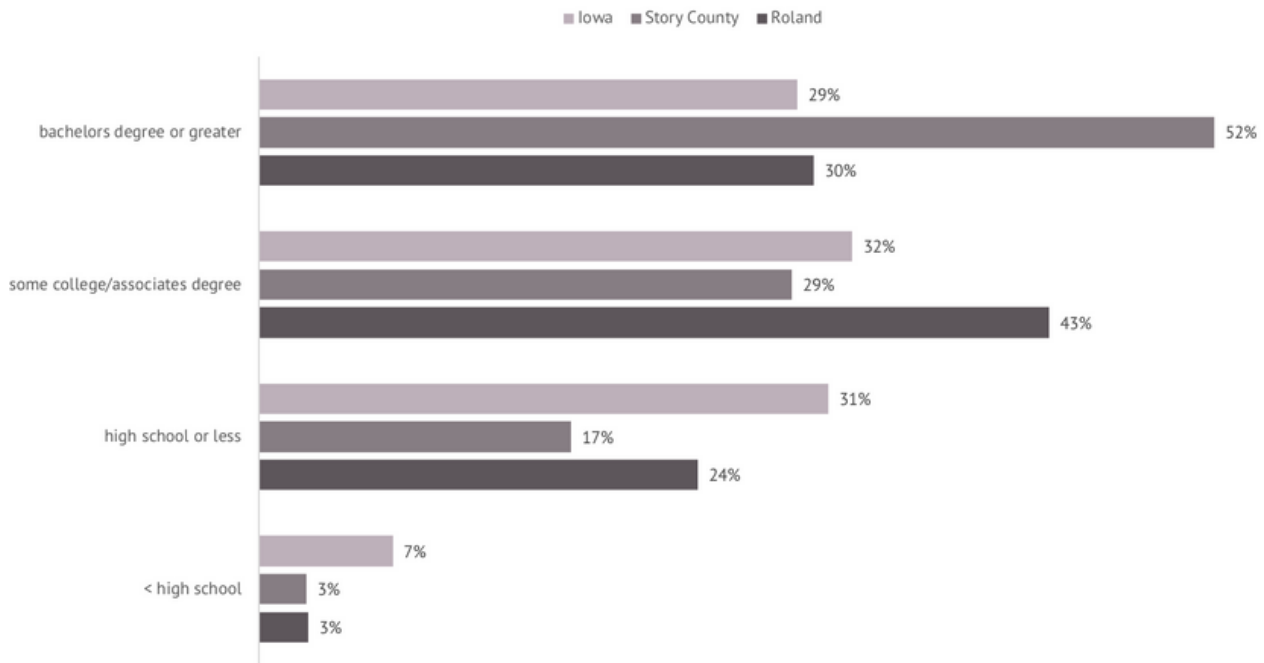
Figure 3.5: *Educational Attainment in Comparison with County and State*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (YEAR). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates maybe.

This figure identifies that the residents of Roland are moderately well educated compared to the state levels, but may lack higher levels of education, especially in comparison to Story County. Story County numbers are skewed to a higher level of education because of the inclusion of Iowa State University education numbers. The inclusion of Iowa State University in Ames results in a skewed distribution.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Household characteristics noted in this chapter are based on the number of household members (size of the household) and the ages of the household members. Such characteristics depict family situations and inform types of housing needs. Family situation is the presence or absence of children, other adults, or seniors. Types of housing needs include, but are not limited to single family homes for young families with children, townhomes for single adults, or apartments and other forms of multifamily housing for seniors. Essentially, there are a variety of housing choices for different types of households and preferences in Roland. This section will cover household size, households with children under 18, households with one or more people over age 60, and householders 65 years and older living alone.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Average household size refers to the average number of people per household, which is a measure of population density. Population density is the measure of the amount of people living within a unit of space, such as a square mile. Typically, smaller household size means lower density, and higher household size means higher density.

Roland's average household size has decreased from 2.73 in 2000 to 2.51 in 2019. This decrease matches trends across the State of Iowa. However, Roland's average household size is greater than both Story City and the State of Iowa. Such a difference corresponds with findings from the population pyramid discussed in the Population section of this chapter; as it appears that people move to Roland to raise their families. However, the shrinking household size can also indicate Roland has less multi-generational households and more sprawl. For purposes of this report, sprawl is defined as development that uses the same amount of space to serve fewer people. Typically, sprawl is characterized by many large homes, cul-de-sacs and dead ends that result in a community that is widely dispersed.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

The percentage of householders living alone age 65 and older in Roland has remained consistent since 2000: 10.72 percent to 10.75 percent. Households with one or more people over the age of 60 saw a near 2 percent increase in 2010 but fell 5 percent in 2019. Households with one or more people under 18 fell dramatically from 42.89 percent in 2000 to 29.10 percent in 2010 accounting for the slight increase in households with one or more people over 60. However, that percentage has increased by nearly 10 percent since 2010 to 38.75 percent and this trend is likely to continue.

Compared with Story City and the State of Iowa, Roland is unique because it is composed of approximately 10 percent more households raising children, and few households with seniors. The State of Iowa and Story City has 28.9 percent and 27.6 percent of households with one or more persons under 18 respectively while Roland is much higher at 38.75 percent. This may indicate that Roland's housing options support growing families or a younger population and lack options for senior citizens.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household income is an important indicator of an area's standard of living. In Roland, households earning $75,000 to $149,999 make up 43.2 percent of the households. This is up from only 15.15 percent in 2000. 9 percent of households earn $150,000 in 2019. Households earning less than $75,000 have all decreased except households earning between $15,000 to $34,999 which has remained steady. This data indicates that a majority of Roland residents enjoy a relatively high standard of living. However, the data shows not everyone is earning more in Roland.
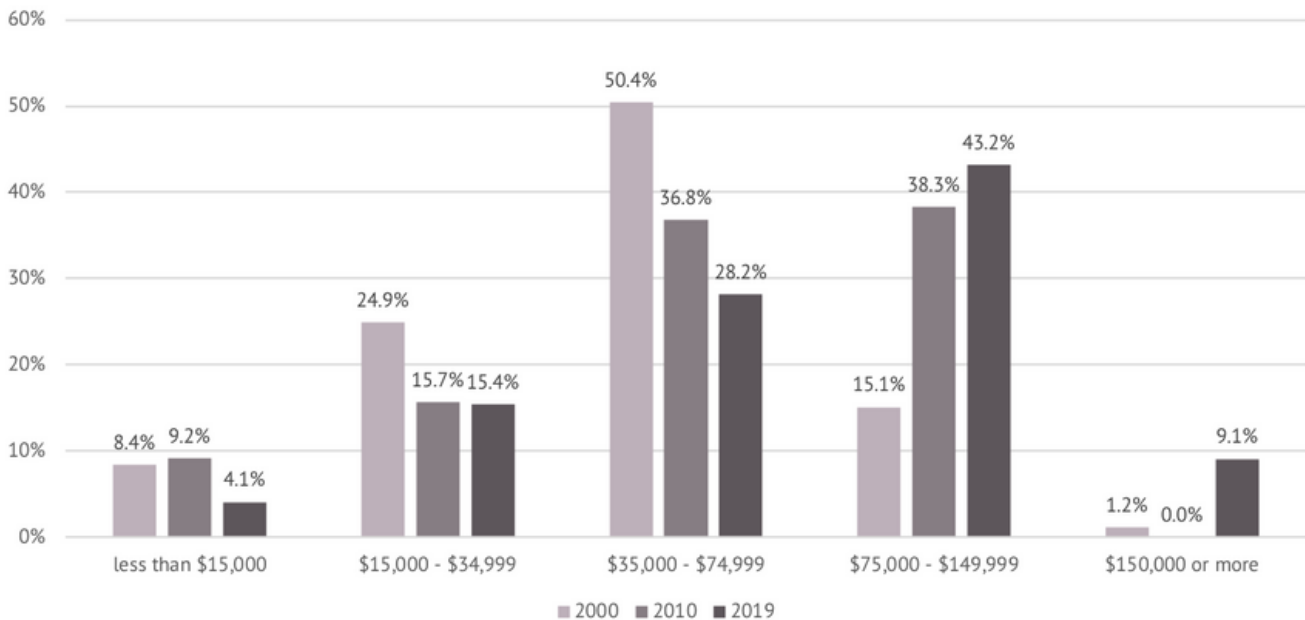
Figure 3.6: *Household Distribution by Income in 2000, 2010, and 2019*

HOUSEHOLD MEDIAN INCOME

Household median income refers to the income level earned where half the households earn above the median value and half the households earns less than the median income. Median income is often utilized as an income statistic because it tends to be a more accurate indicator of household income than average income.

Figure 3.7 compares household median income in Roland, Story County, and Iowa for 2000, 2010, and 2019.

Figure 3.8 compare median income by home ownership in Roland, Story County, and Iowa in 2000, 2010, and 2019.

Since 2000, difference in median income between Roland and Story County and Iowa grew over 7 percent in 2010. In 2019, the gap decreased, but is still 2 percent higher between Story County and Roland, and 3.8 percent between Iowa and Roland.
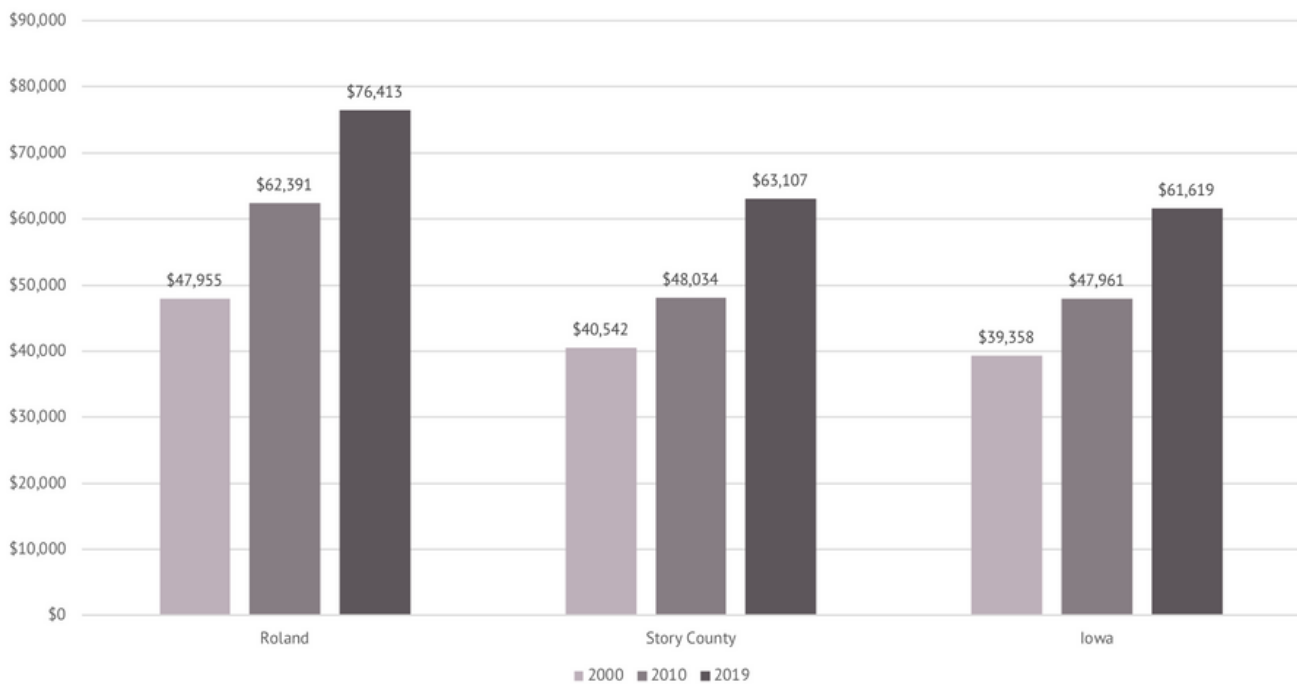
Figure 3.7: *Household Median Income in Roland, Story County, and the state of Iowa overtime*

HOUSEHOLD MEDIAN INCOME BY TENURE

Median income by tenure highlights different incomes based on whether households own their home or are renters. This data can further clarify household median income on its own, highlight standard of living by tenure, and reveal potential inequity between homeowners and renters.
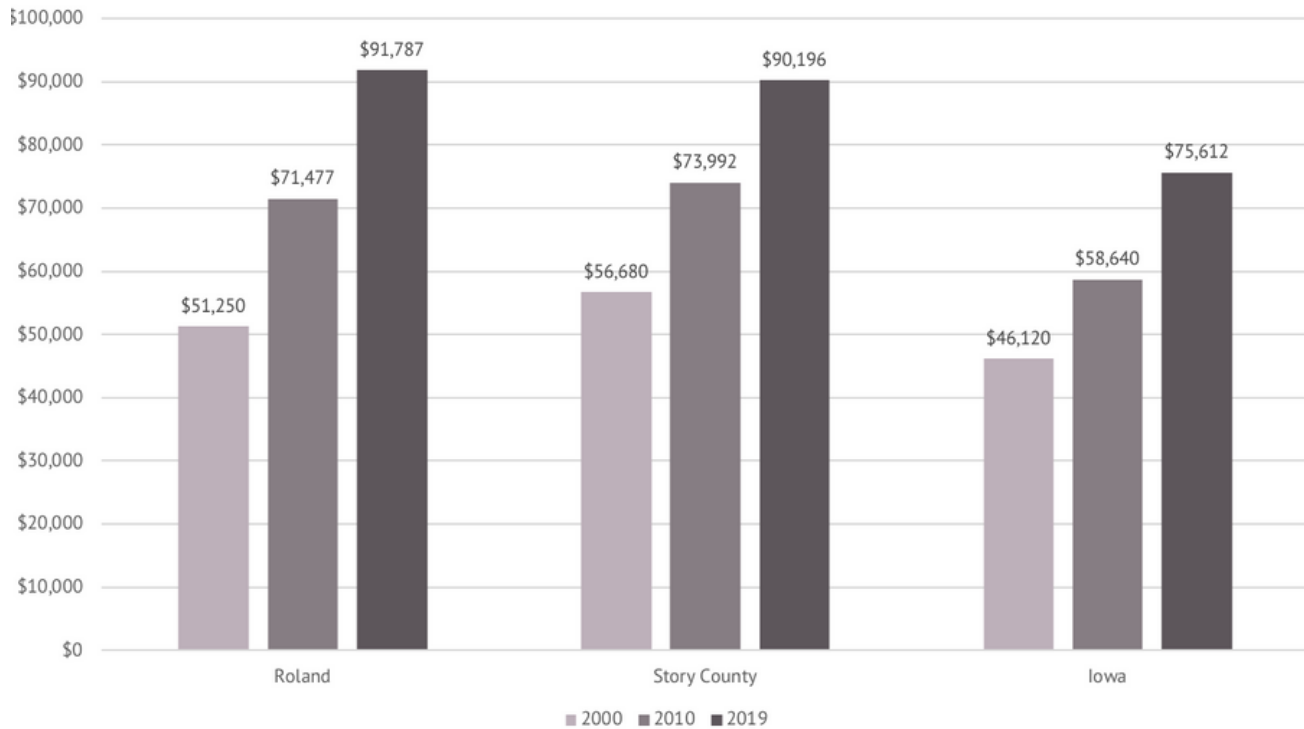
Figure 3.8: *Household Median Income by Owner Occupied Household in Roland, Story County, and the state of Iowa overtime*

Source: Decennial Census Median Household Income by Tenure (2000); ACS 5-Year Estimates Median Income by Tenure (2010; 2019).

In 2000, Roland's renter median income was 27.7 percent higher than Story County and 22.1 percent higher than Iowa. However, renter median income has since dropped to $28,021 in 2019. This differs from trends seen in Story County and the State of Iowa. From 2010 to 2019, renters in Story County and the State of Iowa earned 27.34 percent and 25.98 percent more respectively, but in Roland renters earned 14.87 percent less between 2010 and 2019.

Tying household median income to tenure helped fully explain Roland's economic situation. Roland's overall household median income grew with owner median income which highlights that Roland has many homeowners, and few renters. Unfortunately, this is also tied to Roland's lack of housing options, which limits income diversity and makes Roland residents appear much wealthier than the rest of Story County and the State of Iowa.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide direction for future growth of the community. Understanding the population expectations and demands of the future is important for predicting future needs for housing, jobs, transportation, education, land use, public works, and other infrastructure needs.

This plan includes population projections based on the Average Annual Absolute Population Change (AAAC) and Average Annual Percent Change (AAPC) methods to forecast future population growth based on changes in population between 2000 and 2020. Average Annual Absolute Population Change is calculated and observed to show the annual population growth rate between these two time periods and is extrapolated out based on average annual growth.
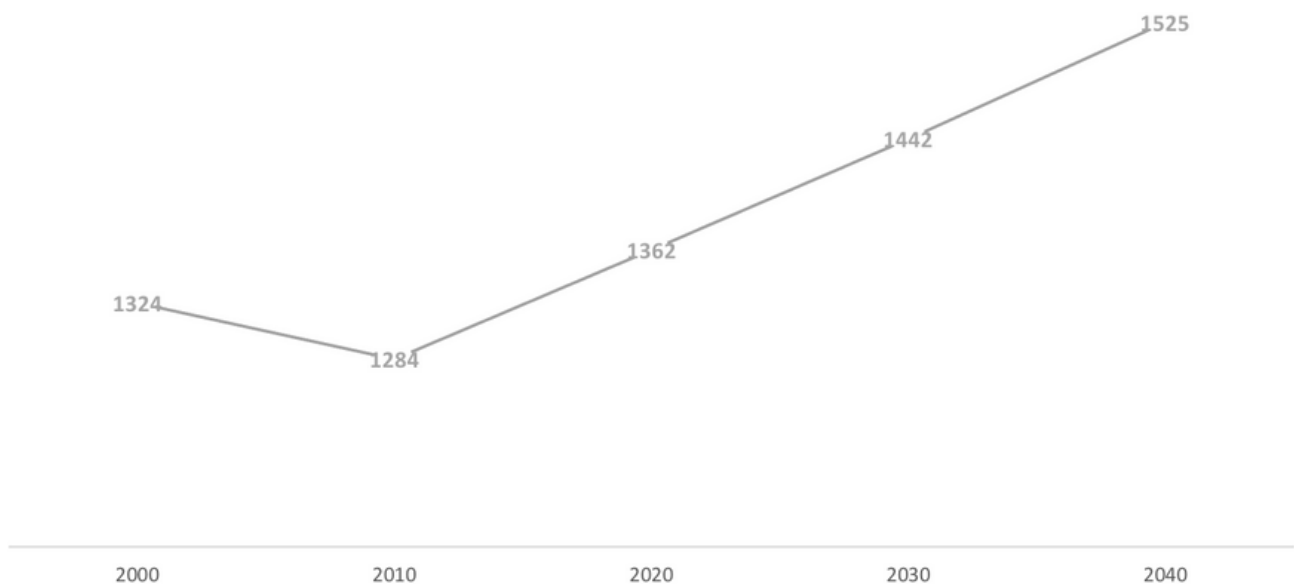
Both of these population projection calculations are based upon a current estimated population of 1,387 for the City of Roland in 2020 and show future population expected by 2040 based on the two different projection methods. Final population projections for 2030 and 2040, take the average of both extrapolated values found in the AAAC and AAACP methods.

- Figure 3.9: *Population Projections for 2030 and 2040 Utilizing AAAC & AACP Methods*

- *Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000, 2010), DEC Decennial Census (2020)*

The population of Roland is expected to steadily increase within the next twenty years. The growth potential in Roland may be affected by outside factors such as surrounding towns, jobs, and housing stock. For Roland specifically, commuting distance and ease will impact the growth potential of the community. As a result, the city should work to position itself to be able to accommodate this expected population growth.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explored and discussed the current population, education, housing, income, and future projections for the City of Roland. This data helps to understand the composition of Roland residents and their needs. Roland's population has remained relatively stagnant from 2000 to 2019 likely due to a limited housing stock. Despite limited growth, Roland residents are achieving higher educational attainment overall. This corresponds with an increase in household median income. However, Roland's overall household median income is inflated due to lack of housing and income diversity in the city. Future projections show that Roland's population does have the potential to increase by 12 percent by 2040. This increase is largely dependent on increasing Roland's housing stock and diversity. The next section of the plan will discuss Housing which will further elaborate on Roland's current housing characteristics and future housing needs.

HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Housing is a basic need that is essential for the population's quality of life. Our goal is to provide a variety of housing types that are accessible to current, and future occupants. Observing Roland's housing stock allows us to determine whether the city is growing or declining, and whether or not property values are increasing or decreasing.

This chapter will examine current development trends and a variety of housing characteristics such as occupancy, tenure, affordability, and physical conditions. Data has been collected by the U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 Decennial Census and American Community Survey's 5-year estimates for the years 2010 through 2019. This information is assembled in a way that allows us to examine the current state of Roland's housing supply and ultimately help us determine the future need for housing.

HOUSING UNITS

Roland has identified a total of 532 housing units according to the 2020 Decennial Census. Housing units refer to any dwelling that shelters an individual or a family. Family homes make up 93 percent of the housing supply. Two-Family Duplexes make up 3 percent, Condos make up 2 percent, and Multi-Family apartment units make up the remaining 2 percent. The housing types that are available in Roland reflects the population that exists. Single family units are typically used by families of 3 or more, while young professionals, the elderly, and households of low income after require or prefer other forms of housing.

Roland Dwelling Types & Timelines

Approximately 35 percent of the housing stock in Roland was constructed before 1939. Since the 1940's, most housing units were constructed either between 1970-1979 (15.8 percent) or during the 1990's, with 21.3 percent built. The data shows that very few housing units have been built over the last 20 years.

The timeline of additional housing units shows an erratic development pattern. Roland's housing growth has two identifiable spurts, the first being an additional 90 units in the 1970's and the second one in the 1990's, with an additional 121 units. Recent trends show that growth has declined due to an undervalued market and little land available. Since 2010, only an additional 11 housing units have been introduced to the housing market. Most housing units built after 2000 are single family homes built on the southwest side of Roland. Multi-family units have not been built in Roland since 2003.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Housing conditions examine the structural integrity of the housing units. The Story County Assessor utilizes a 7-point scoring system, categorizing the building conditions from 'excellent' to 'very poor'. The properties are scored on their external elements such as paint, windows, doors, siding, and roofing. While a home's curb appeal is synonymous with the market value, this study is focused on the safety and welfare of the inhabitants. Homes that are considered 'poor' or 'very poor' pose a risk to current and future residents. Under this review and scoring system, the majority of Roland's housing stock is within 'normal' and above quality.

HOUSING VALUES

Housing values in Roland continue to rise over time. In 2000, the median housing value in Roland was $97,700. By 2010, the median housing rose to $134,500. As of 2019, according to the ACS 5-year estimates, Roland holds a median housing value of $146,000. (Figure 4.1). These figures are similar to nearby Story City, which had the median values of $93,000 in 2000, $128,600 in 2010, and 145,900 in 2019. Story County had median values of 115,800 in 2000, 156000 in 2010, and $185,800 in 2019. The State of Iowa had median values $82,500 in 2000, $119,200 in 2010, and $147,800 in 2019.

Figure 4.1 compares the median property values of Roland to Story City, Story County and Iowa over time. The changes in median property values are similar across the four geographies. From 2000 to 2010, Roland's median property values rose 38 percent, Story City rose 38 percent as well, Story County rose 35 percent, and the State of Iowa's median property value rose 44 percent. From 2010 to 2019, Roland's median property values rose 9 percent, Story City rose 13 percent, Story County rose 19 percent, and Iowa rose 24 percent.

FUTURE HOUSING NEED

Future need of housing was determined by comparing Roland's current housing supply to population projections and vacancy rates. A healthy vacancy rate is 5 percent[3]; this indicates that housing units are being filled, yet there are enough units available to provide adequate housing options. Looking at Figure 4.10, we can see how Roland's vacancy rates have changed over time. Vacancy rates peaked in 2015 at 7.2 percent. Currently, vacancies are at an all-time low at 1.4 percent, well below the healthy rate of 5 percent. This indicates that, currently Roland does not have adequate housing options.

	Roland	Story City	Story County	Iowa
■ 2000	97700	93000	115800	82500
■ 2010	134500	128600	156000	119200
■ 2019	146300	145,900	185800	147800
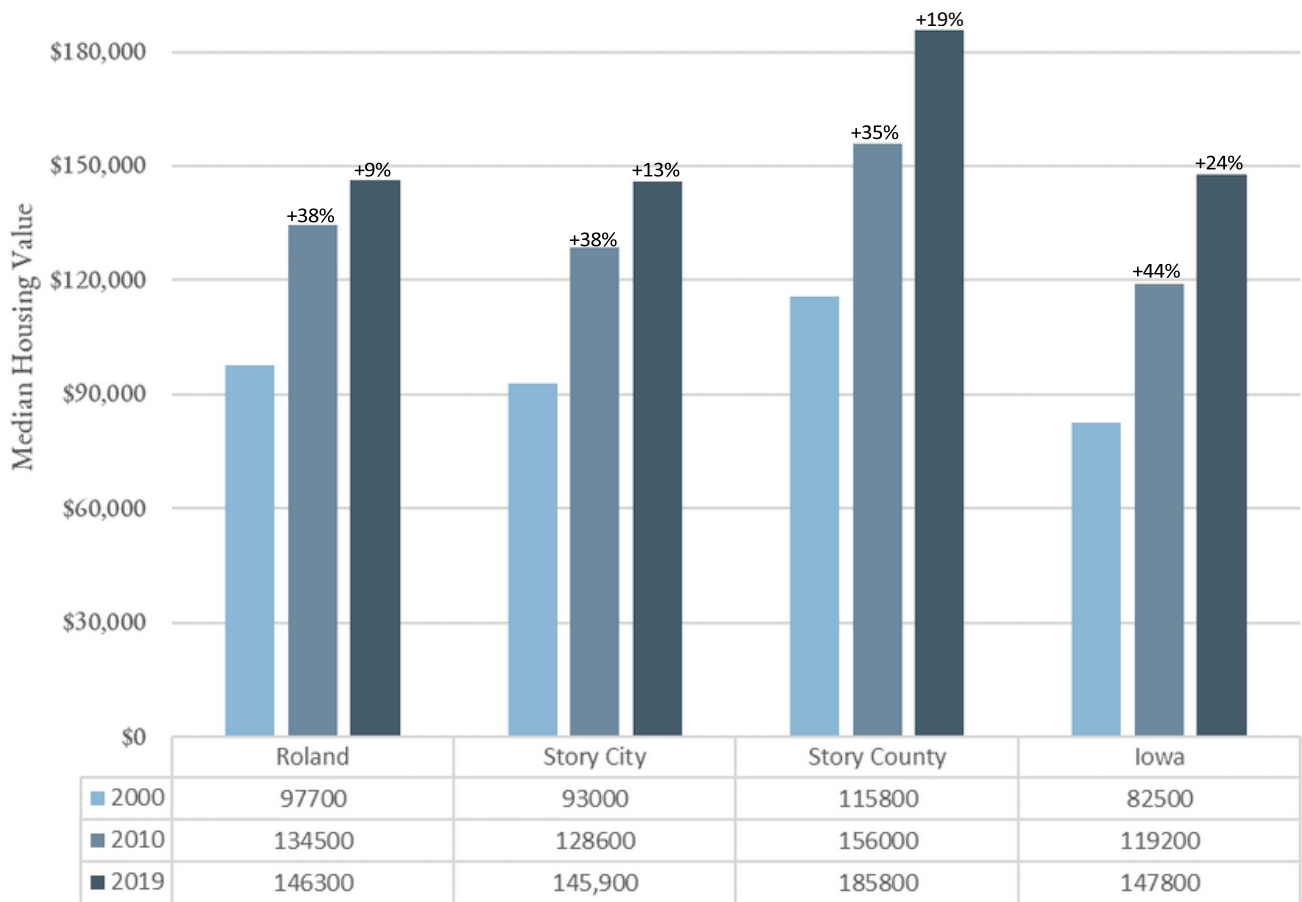
Figure 4.1: *Median Housing Values, 2000-2010 Decennial Census*

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates: Selected Housing Characteristics
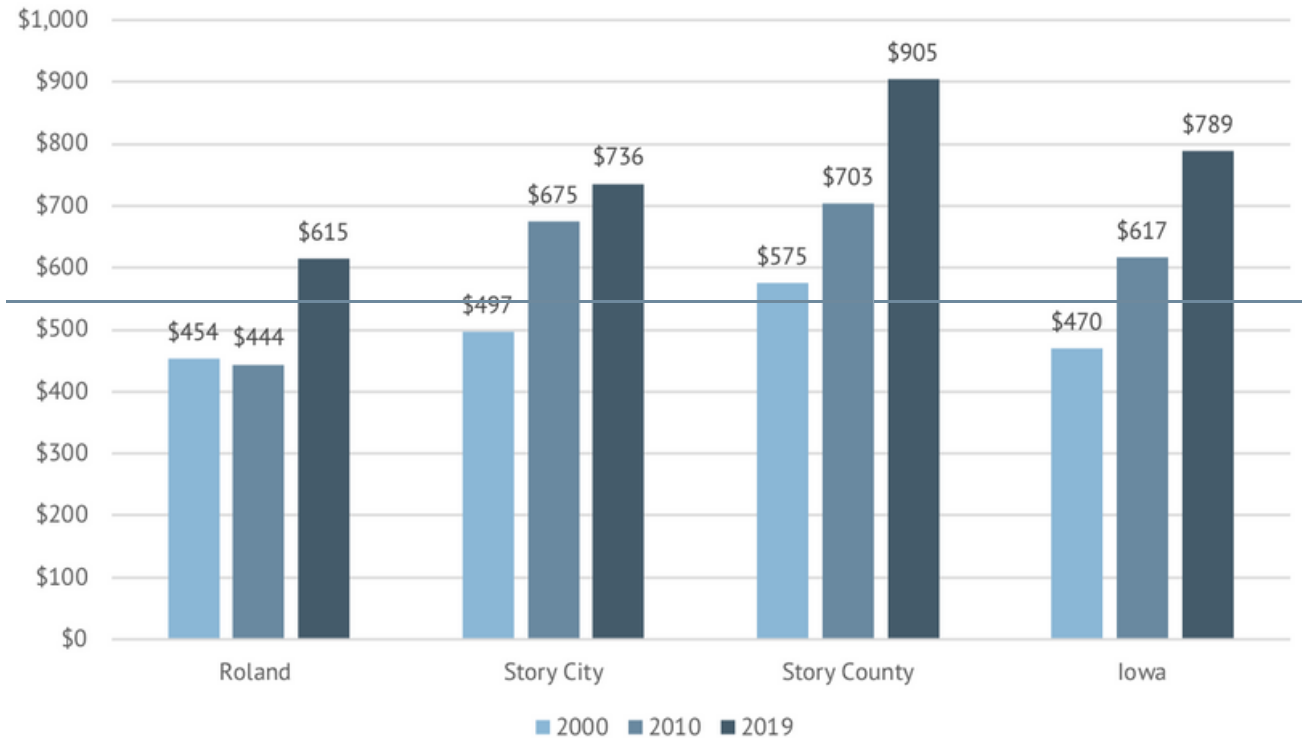
Figure 4.2: *Median Rent for Roland, Story City, Story County, and the state of Iowa in 2000, 2010, and 2019*

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates: Selected Housing Characteristics

Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of household income that is used to pay rent. In 2000 the average renter in Roland paid 22.1 percent of their income on rent. In 2010 the rent/income ratio grew to 39.1 percent. As of 2019 the average renter in Roland pays 37.5 percent of their income on rent, which shows a decline from 2010. The rental market appears to be more affordable in Story City, where only 28.6 percent of the average renter's income goes to rent.

Roland's rental market appears more affordable when comparing data to the county and state trends. In Story County the average renter is paying 54.6 percent of their income on rent, and the average renter across the State of Iowa is paying 43.1 percent of their income on rent.

Unfortunately, these rental rates demonstrate that rental housing in Roland, Story County and the State of Iowa is above the desired 30 percent, which indicates a cost burdened rental market. Roland should consider creating a more affordable rental housing market by increasing the amount of dedicated multi-family units, rather than single family rental properties.
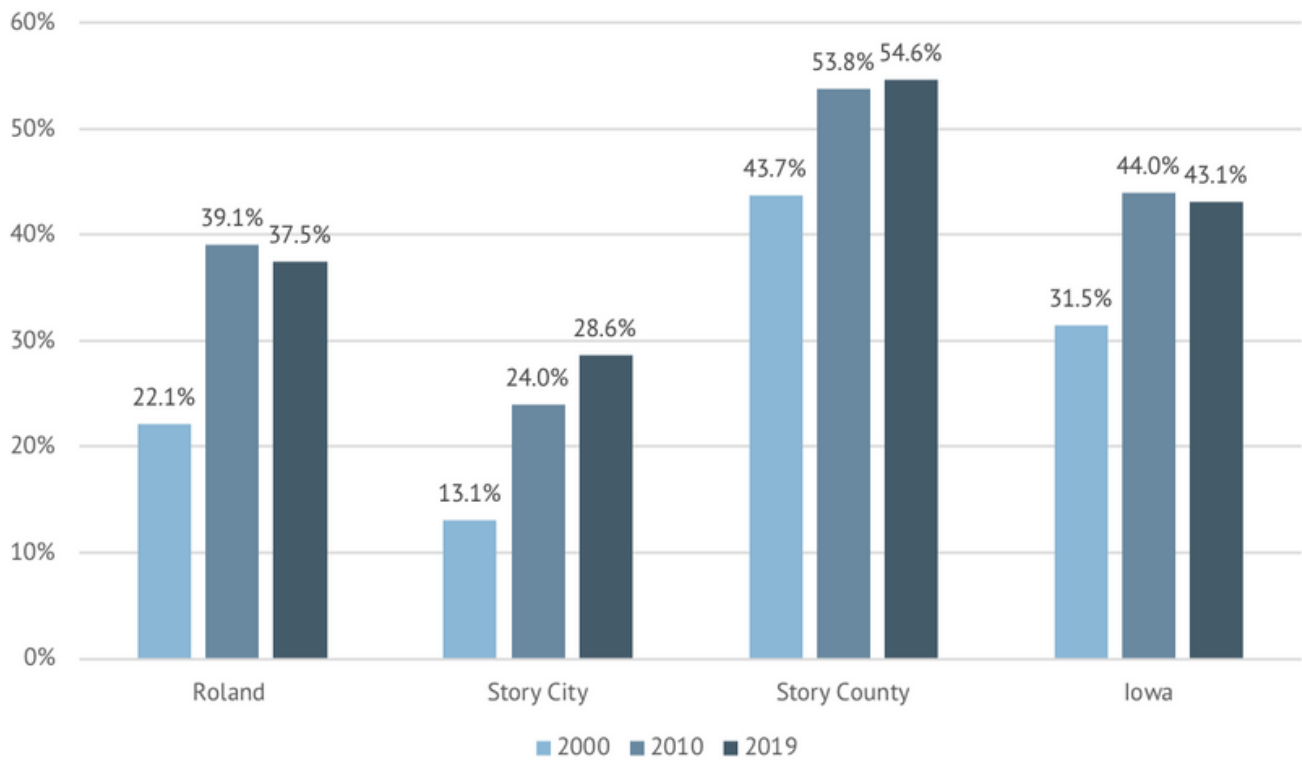
Figure 4.3: *Percent of Income Spent on Housing*

Source: 2000 Decennial Census Selected Housing Characteristics, 2010 Decennial Census Selected Housing Characteristics, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Selected Housing Characteristics

LAND FOR FUTURE HOUSING

If Roland continues to focus development on single family housing, it will not fill all the areas of growth the community is needing. Mixed use, single family homes, rentals and different modern housing models are all going to be required to show sustainable community growth on available land. Roland should focus on traditionally easier development targets for new housing growth. Infill within current city limits with demolition and cleanup of public nuisances, building on new development opportunities and looking to create a viable Future Land Use model for targeted growth.

CONCLUSION

This housing chapter reviewed and discussed the characteristics of the housing stock located within the City of Roland. In addition, need for future housing units was estimated based upon the expected forecasted population. Single family housing continues to make up the majority of Roland's housing stock. Roland's current supply of housing is in good quality even as the structures age. Proper maintenance of these homes demonstrate community pride and financial means to maintain community standards within reason.

ECONOMICS

INTRODUCTION

The economic health of a community has wide-ranging effects on other aspects of a city, such as being able to determine whether a population will grow or stagnate1. This chapter reviews and discusses the economic health of the City of Roland, which is achieved through the examination of Roland's business sector, labor force, and retail trade. The number and types of businesses located in the city will be examined to determine the quality and type of jobs available. Labor force characteristics such as employment and median worker income determine worker standard of living. Commuting patterns that include the number of workers coming in and out of Roland, among other commuting patterns, will also be identified in this chapter. Finally, retail trade and sales statistics determine the vitality of Roland's retail sector. Using this data, one can assess the state of the local economy to forecast demand for commercial and industrial development[1].

NUMBER AND TYPES OF BUSINESSES

Roland's economic base is made up of a number of businesses. Variety in a city's economic base can lead to greater economic resilience [2] and can determine what jobs are available in a city. Figure 5.1 shows the types of businesses within Roland comprising construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, finance, services, and administrative services.
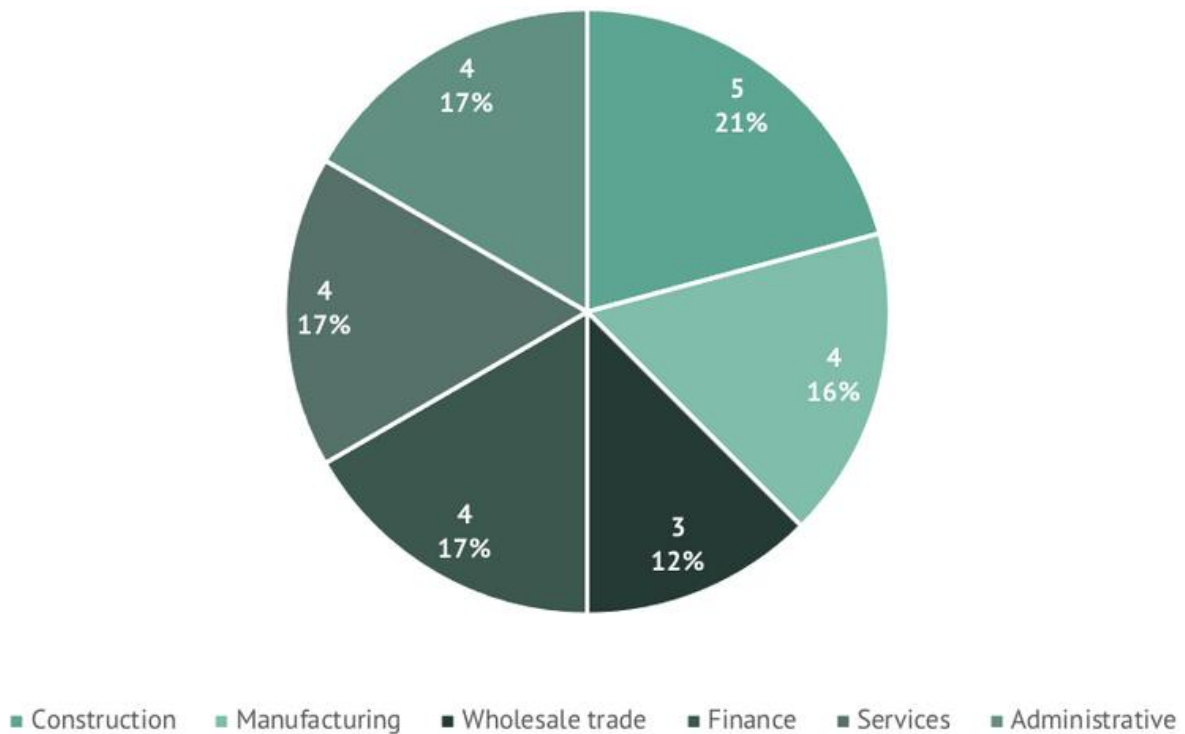
Figure 5.1: *Number and Types of Firms*

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Roland has several key employers that comprise the backbone of its economic base. Figure 5.2 shows these employers and the number of employees. These key employers are Roland-Story Community School District, Hawkeye Molding, Key Cooperative, and Innovative Lighting. Roland-Story Community School District is estimated to be the largest employer in the city with an estimated 50 employees on staff, as a result of the middle school being located in Roland. They are followed by Hawkeye Molding with 36 employees, Key Cooperative with 33 employees and Innovative Lighting with 25 employees. This data was collected by calling businesses and asking for number of employees. These employers in total employ around 144 people, which is only around 18 percent of the 787 Roland residents in the labor force. This shows that while the key employers are somewhat large, they are not large enough to satisfy the current labor force present in the community.
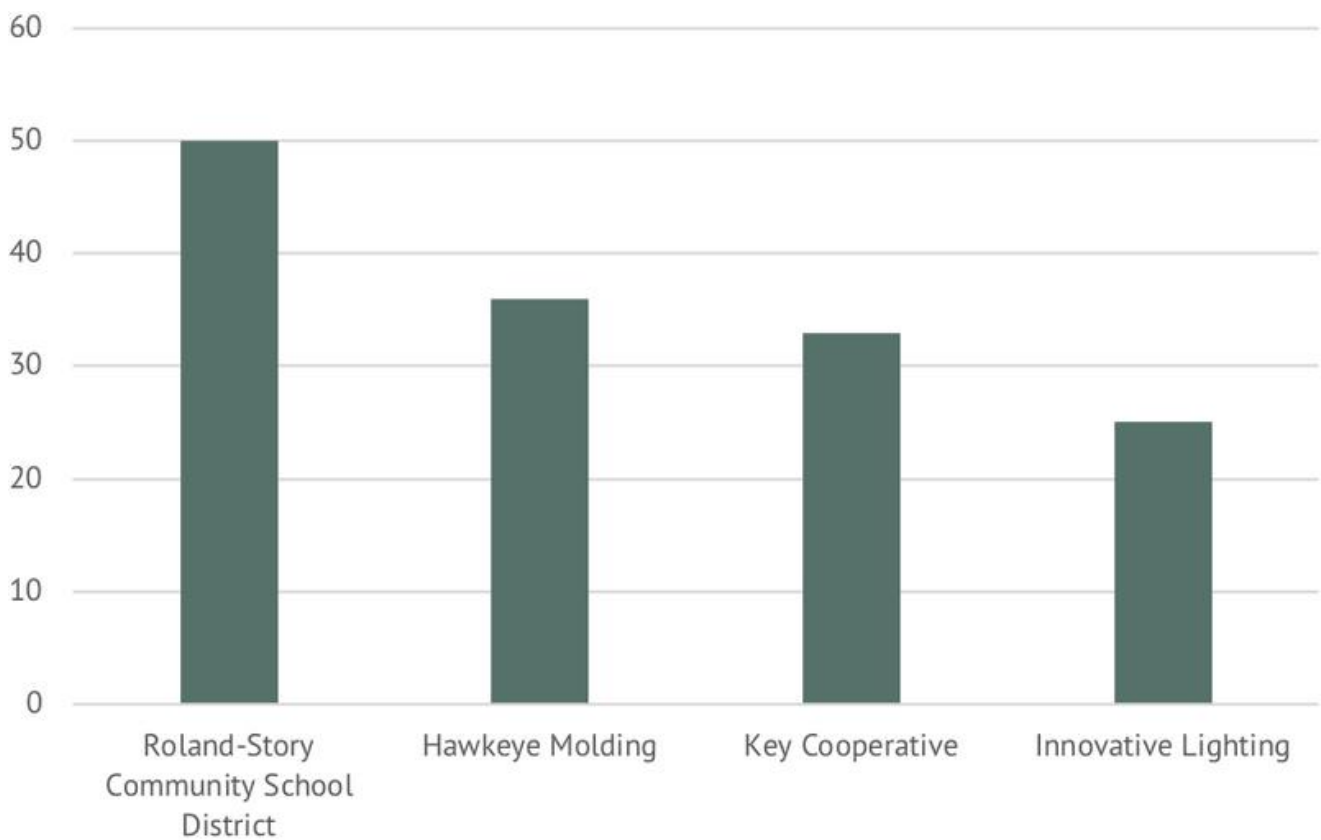
Figure 5.2: *Major Employers in Roland*
Source: Collected by author

LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

The quality of a labor force has a large effect on determining future economic growth. Unemployment leads to lower household spending level, so large amounts of unemployment in a community can have negative effects on community spending overall. The working population in Roland is mostly employed, showing a higher standard of living for residents.

Median earnings for workers in Roland. From the time of 2016-2020 the median earnings for workers rose to $47,054, an increase of 5.4 percent from the previous period. The table shows comparison to two peer cities, Slater and Gilbert. Roland's earnings are higher than both communities. However, both cities saw a bigger increase in earnings. Slater's median earnings rose 9.5 percent while Gilbert's increased by 34.9 percent during the same time.

EMPLOYED POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The U.S. Census provides strong data regarding the industries where the labor force of Roland works. This can be useful in showing what skills the residents of Roland have, which can be useful when looking to attract firms to the city. As this data shows some industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, retail trade, and finance and insurance have increased their employment over the last 10 years while other industries such as construction, transportation and utilities, and education have seen a decline in employment. However, overall employment has increased.

WORKER INFLOWS AND OUTFLOWS

Worker inflow and outflow analyses show the movement of workers commuting in and out of Roland. This can show whether Roland is an importer or exporter of workers from the 2019 Roland Retail Analysis. According to this data, 682 Roland residents are commuting outside Roland for work, while only 11 are choosing to work locally. This indicates that Roland is an attractive place to live, as many people who work in other communities such as Ames choose to live in Roland for multiple factors. This is due to a multitude of factors, such as its proximity to Ames, affordable housing options, and a general small-town feel.

Interestingly, there are 158 people who live outside of Roland who come into the community for work. This shows that Roland may be failing to capture these workers as residents, or there may be a housing/job mismatch that the city should alleviate. A high percentage of commuters also shows a lack of opportunities for the residents, as it shows that there may not be many jobs for people in Roland.
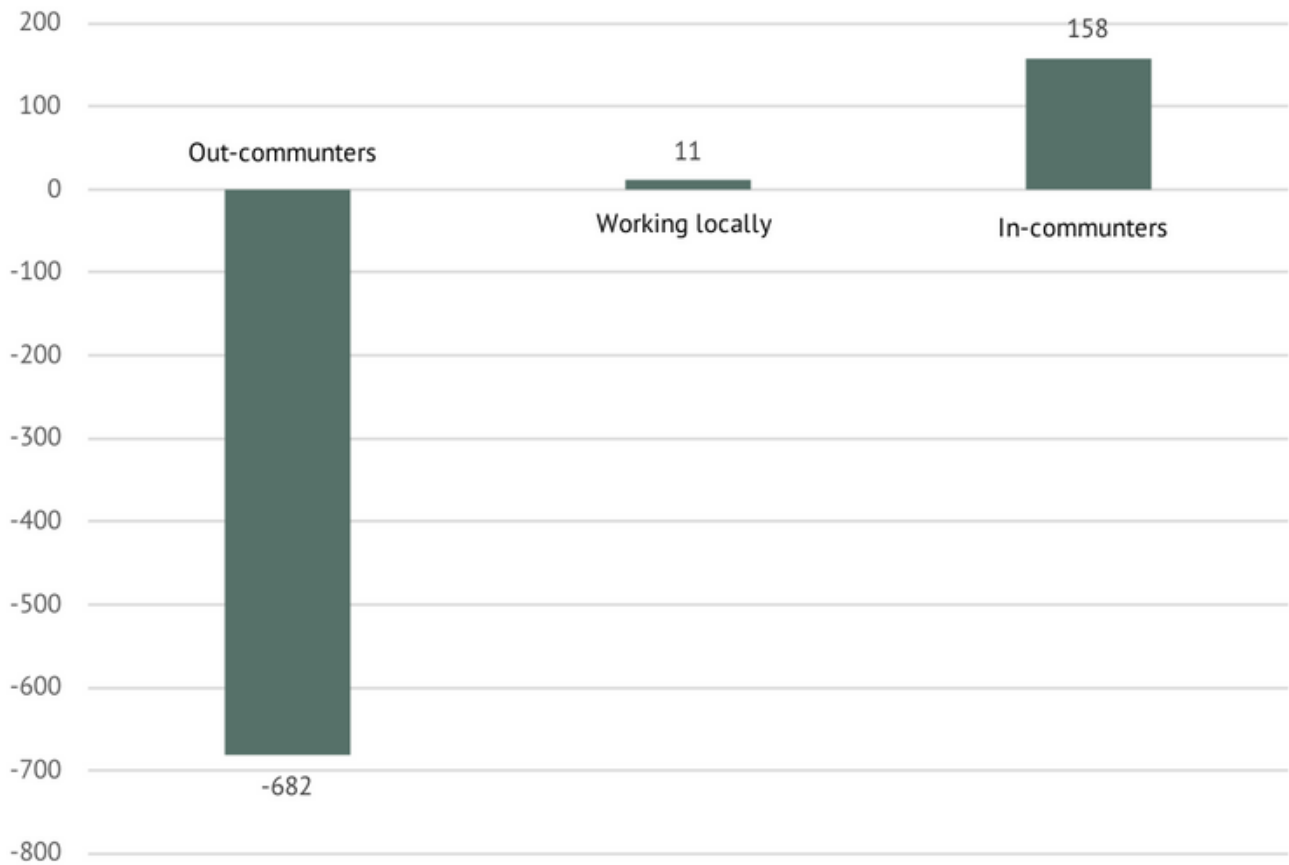
Figure 5.3: *Roland Worker Inflows and Outflows*

Table 5.4 provides greater insight to where residents work. Almost two thirds of Roland residents commute to Ames for work. There is also a significant number of people who commute to the Des Moines-Ankeny area as well, showing the appeal of a community like Roland as there would be far more convenient options for those individuals.

Table 5.4: *Roland Workforce Destinations*

Working within Roland	22	8.7%	6.3
Working elsewhere	231	91.3%	93.7

TRADE AREA AND PULL FACTOR ANALYSIS

Trade area capture and pull factor ratio are two useful indicators to determine the economic health of a community. Trade area capture is measured by converting sales data into customer equivalents. Roland's trade area measures the number of customers that are serviced by the retail businesses in the city. If a trade area is greater than the city's population, it shows that the city is bringing in more customers including those who live outside the city, in addition to serving the city's population. If the trade capture area is lower than the city's population, it shows that residents choose to shop in other places than the city to satisfy their retail needs. This would also show a leakage for the city in terms of lost sales tax revenue. The following table shows Roland's estimated trade area capture as well as the annualized number of shoppers.

Roland's trade area is well below the current population, indicating that most residents choose to shop elsewhere. This result is likely due to the number of residents who work outside the city, where shopping options are more plentiful than in Roland. This shows that Roland's overall retail sector is very underdeveloped based on its population. The potential for small business support, sales tax revenue, and local employment opportunities is not available to the community. This creates a cycle of disinvestment, where the city loses revenue to attract businesses leading to further losses.

Pull factor is a similar metric to trade area capture, derived from taking trade area capture and dividing it by population. The metric shows the ratio between a community's population and the number of actual shoppers based on estimated retail sales. The figure below shows Roland's pull factor and the average pull factor of cities in its peer group (cities with populations between 500 to 2,499 located within a metropolitan county). Communities with a pull factor above 1.0 attract customers from outside, conversely, communities with a pull factor below 1.0 tend to have residents who shop elsewhere. Roland's pull factor was .22 in 2019. Communities in its peer group tend to have higher ratios on average, in 2019 the peer group mean was .54. This indicator also shows that a large amount of Roland residents chooses to shop elsewhere for basic necessities. This means that Roland has the potential to develop and improve its retail base to strengthen its sales tax revenue and provide employment opportunities.
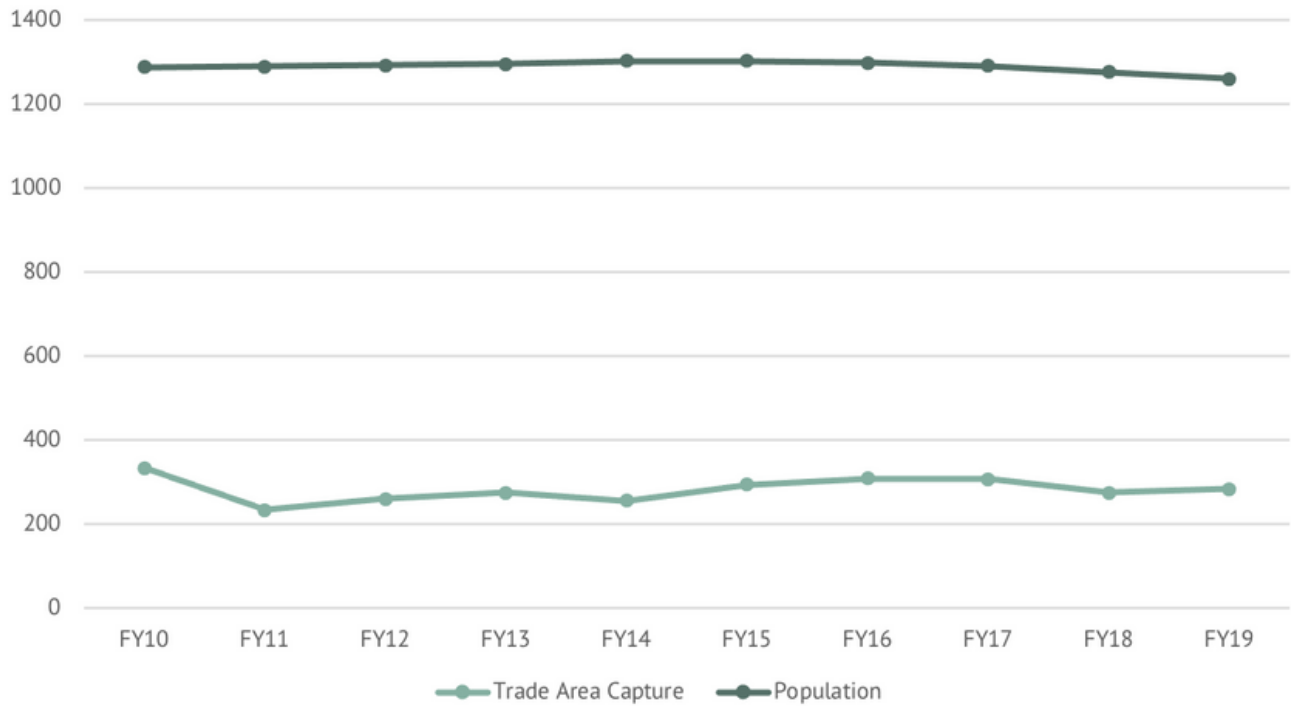
Figure 5.5: *Trade Area Capture and Population in Roland*
Source: Roland Retail Trade Analysis Report, (2019), Iowa State Extension and Outreach
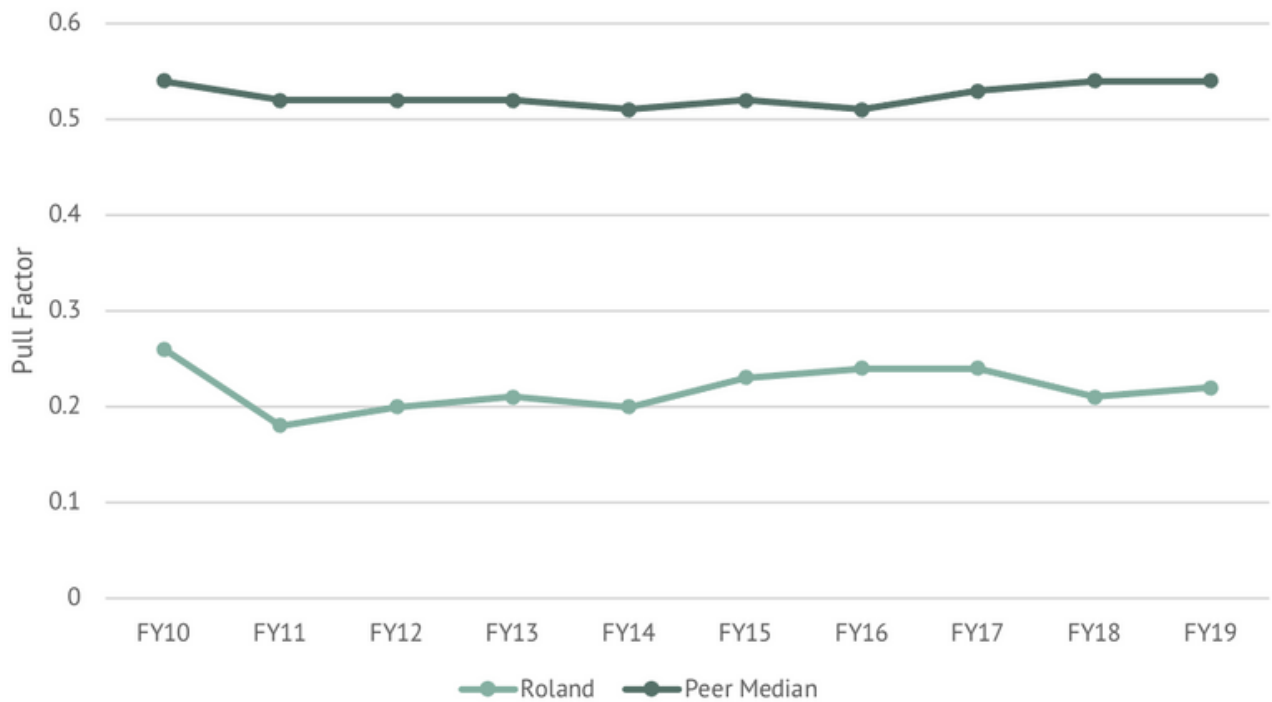
Figure 5.6: *Roland Pull Factor Analysis*
Source: Roland Retail Trade Analysis Report. (2019). Iowa State Extension and Outreach

RETAIL SALES INFORMATION

The ability to provide services locally to residents is crucial for a high quality of life. This is most applicable when you consider residents with lower mobility, where traveling distances for groceries or basic needs could be a burden. Local retail should service the basic necessities of residents, making it convenient for them to acquire essential goods without leaving the city. In addition, community businesses could also provide jobs and increase sales tax revenue. Retail businesses generate sales tax numbers that can then go into public works and improve quality of life, creating a "cycle of investment".

Figure 5.6 shows the number of reporting retail establishments in Roland and three different peer communities, Slater, Colo and Gilbert. These peer communities were chosen for having similar population structures and for all being located within Story County, meaning that they are all smaller towns that rely on Ames as a central economic hub. The figure below shows that these communities tend to have a similar number of businesses and these figures have stayed consistent over the years.

Figure 5.6: *Number of Reporting Establishments in Roland and Peer Communities*

Figure 5.7 then displays the taxable sales within Roland and its peer communities. Roland is consistently behind its peer communities with sales estimated at $3.6 million in 2019. This is well below Slater (with $12.6 million sales), and slightly below Colo (with $6.2 million sales) and Gilbert (with $5.4 million sales). This shows that while Roland may have a similar number of businesses as it peers, they fail to be businesses that contribute heavily to sales numbers.
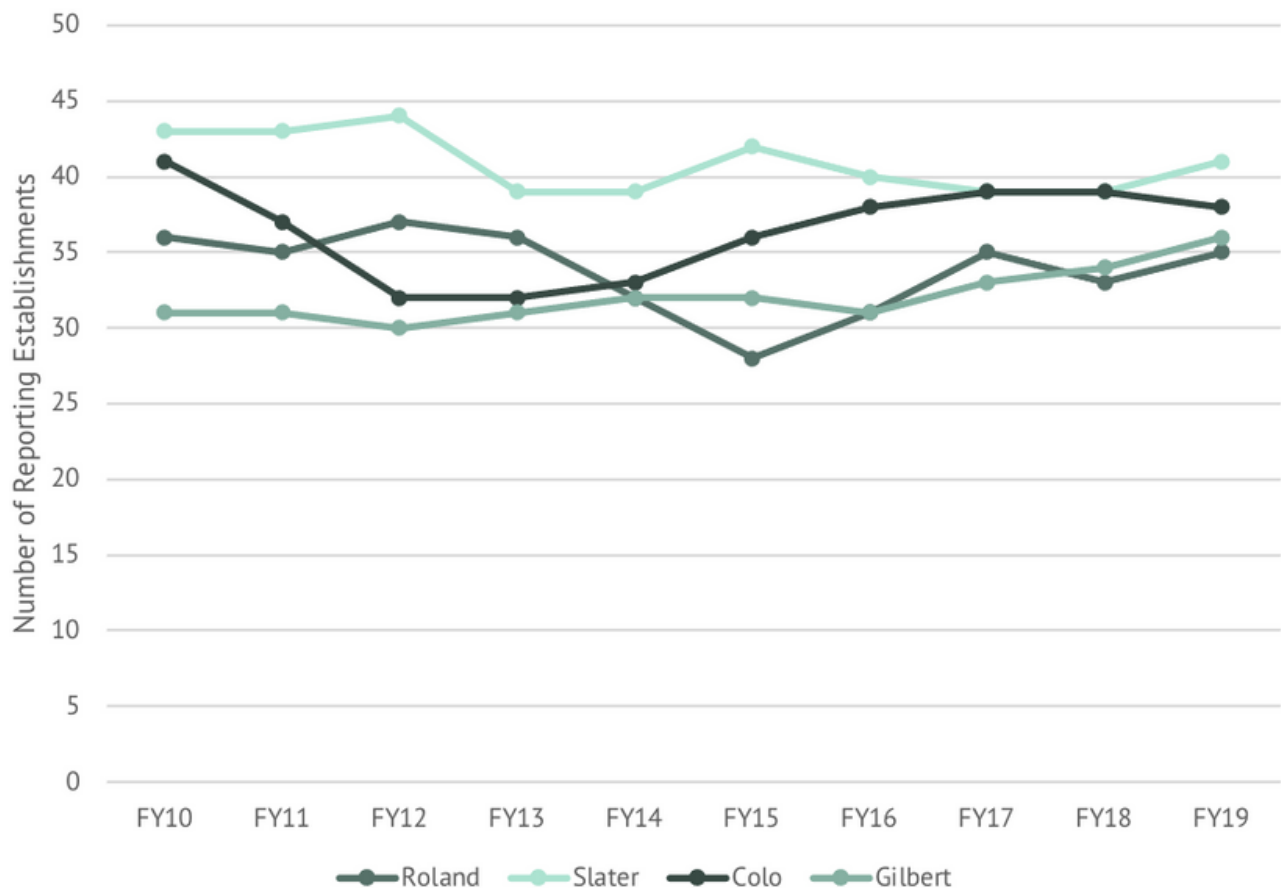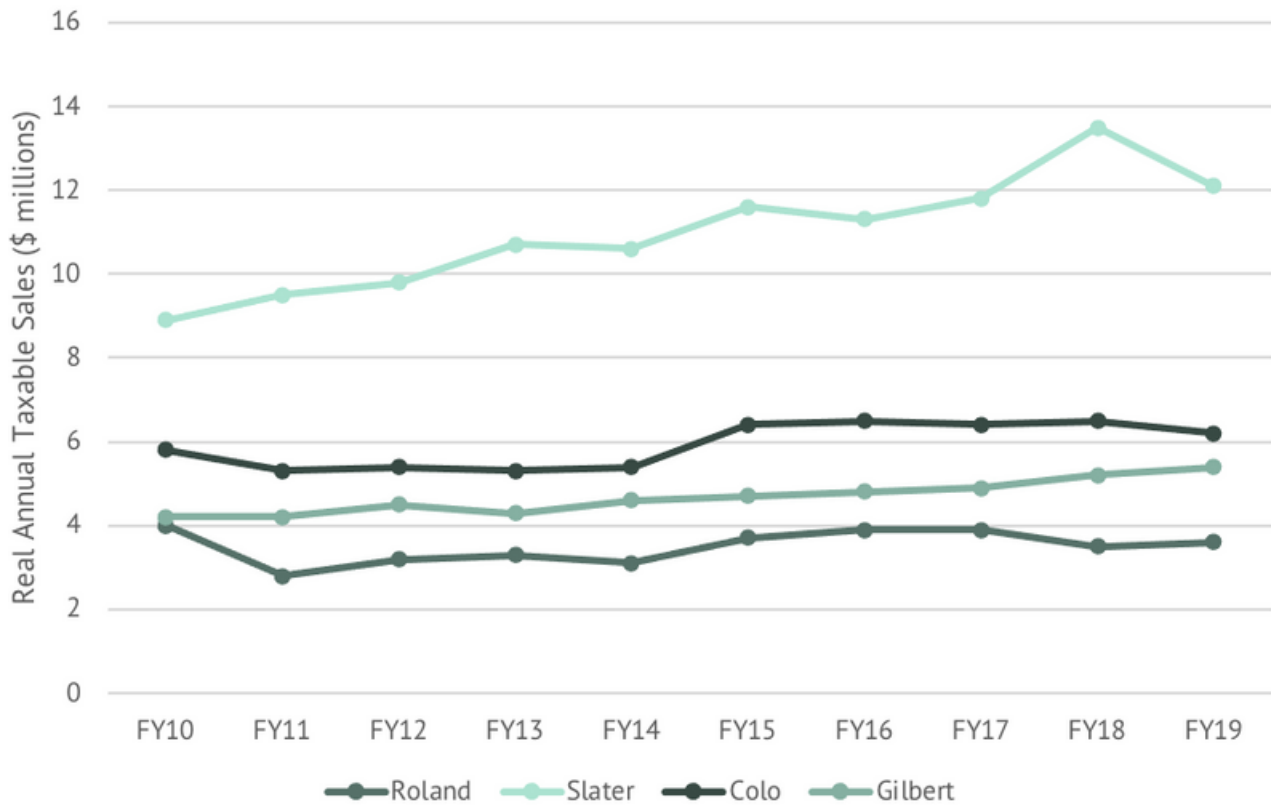

Figure 5.7: *Annual Taxable Sales in Roland and Peer Communities*

Source: Roland Retail Trade Analysis Report, (2019), Iowa State Extension and Outreach; Slater Retail Trade Analysis, (2019), Iowa State Extension and Outreach; Colo Retail Trade Analysis, (2019), Iowa State Extension and Outreach; Gilbert Retail Trade Analysis, (2019), Iowa State Extension and Outreach.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is important to assess the economic health of a community. While Roland's residents enjoy a good standard of living, it has not translated into a fully developed retail and business sector. Many of Roland's population works outside the city, and because of that, residents tend to spend money in communities other than Roland. This has resulted in a cycle of disinvestment by businesses rather than investment within the city's downtown district. Roland has a need for more jobs that allow the residents to work in the community, and more retail opportunities so residents do not have to leave the community in order to have their essential needs met. This can break the "cycle of disinvestment" that communities like Roland struggle with and can give Roland more financial flexibility and stability than they currently have. An improved commercial district not only makes the community more attractive, services local residents' needs, and can provide employment opportunities but it can also contribute positively to the city's tax base which can help to support public facilities improvements, which is discussed in the next chapter.

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PUBLIC FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION

WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

To provide appropriate and adequate facilities throughout Roland, water and sewer systems are utilized. To provide fresh water, the city has two wells located in northern Roland (shown in Figure 6.1). These wells have the capacity to pump 200 gallons per minute and can produce 110,000 gallons per day. Roland's water tower is located at 213 E. Heise Street and has a 250,000-gallon capacity which relies on gravity to pressure the water lines. The water treatment plant is located at 202 E. Ash Street and includes two wells and a treatment plant. The water distribution system includes a 25,000-gallon ground storage reservoir, two high service pumps, a 250,000-gallon elevated storage tower, 183 known valves, 67 fire hydrants, 564 known curb stops, and around 53,200 feet of water main[1].

When looking at individual water usage, the average Roland resident uses between 80 to 100 gallons of water per day. In 2016, Roland's city engineer inspected the water facility to determine any urgent changes necessary to accommodate population growth.

The inspection found with a projected population of 1,520 in 2040, Roland should continue to have no issues accommodating a growing population in

Figure 6.1: *Well Locations*

Source: *Created by Roland Public Works.*

terms of providing an adequate water supply. Roland produces approximately 73 gallons of wastewater per resident per day, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources design standard is 100 gallons per day. There is even more room for a growing population of up to 2,270 people without a need for major changes to current wastewater systems[2].

While the water system in Roland is operational and is suitable for a growing population, the sewer system is approximately 100 years old (installed in the early 1920s) and is receiving maintenance and yearly upgrades repair. The city's two sewage lagoons are located in southwestern Roland and have a 7.5-million-gallon capacity each, with the main stormwater drain being Bear Creek. In 2019, Roland received a $4.1 million low-interest loan from the State of Iowa. This enabled the lagoons to be updated by converting the two-cell aerated lagoon to a Lemna lagoon to comply with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) standards. The city chose the Lemna brand lagoon because it allows for the addition of reactors and processes if needed in the future. The east cell of the current lagoon was divided into two sections with added aeration and a rubber lining. The west cell is an equalization basin for stormwater storage when necessary. The project is now complete, and the new lagoon system has been operative since 2019[3].

Because Roland is long overdue for a new sewer system, the city worked with Story County to help make this happen. The County received $18 million in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Roland applied for grant funding through the county and received approximately $1 million. Roland requested and received $830,000 for storm sewer upgrades and $170,000 for water main looping. These improvements are very important to decrease the flooding of streets and private properties caused by non-functioning or non-existent stormwater intakes. When looking at the improvements from a long-term perspective, residents will also benefit from the cost burdens associated with flood repairs. Aside from that, floods pose serious health concerns for the community, and removing pooling water promptly is key to the health and well-being of residents. Stagnant water promotes the growth of parasites, mold, and bacteria when present for long periods of time, which is unhealthy for people to be near[4].

The main priority for the application of county funds is to repair the stormwater system. However, the IDNR identified and recommended an additional destination for funds: looping of dead-end water mains. These improvements will provide many benefits, including better water quality (for Roland residents and everyone downstream from the town within the County), higher water pressure, improved fire protection, and an overall increase in reliability of water service for customers with the water flowing into the line from two directions, rather than just one[4].

With plans to complete the projects as soon as possible, Roland's water and sewer systems should not pose serious concerns once repairs are completed and if the systems are well maintained.
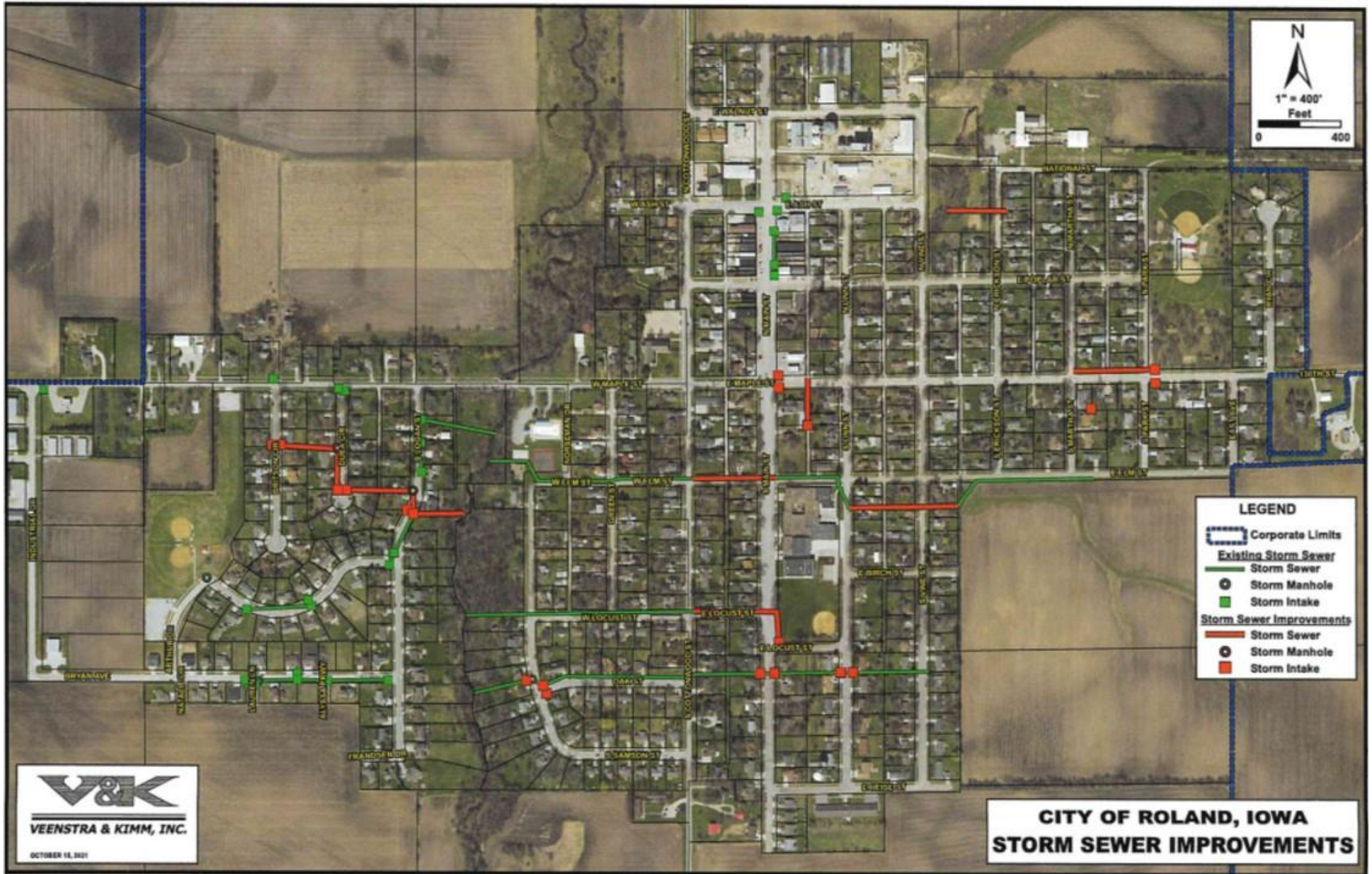
Figure 6.2: *Planned Storm Sewer Improvements*

Source: Created by Roland Public Works and Veenstra & Kimm, Inc.

WATER AND SEWER UTILITY BILLING

As highlighted in the previous section, Roland provides water and sewer services to residents. Residents can pay for water at either a metered or unmetered rate. The following information was collected from Chapter 92 of the Roland Code of Ordinances. To calculate the water bill for each resident at a metered rate, water meters are read on the 25th and 26th of each month. Water bills are sent to residents by the first of each month and are due by the 20th of each month. Water is billed in 100 cubic feet increments, equivalent to 748 gallons of water. The minimum bill for metered water is $18.34 for the usage of your first 100 cubic feet of water. Any amount over 100 cubic feet is $4.70 per 100 cubic feet at a discounted rate. For unmetered water rates, the cost each month is $22.43, plus an additional $4.70 per person residing at the residence. As of July 2021, there will be an automatic 2 percent increase in price each fiscal year to ensure the utility systems are funded for improvements and maintenance.

Sewer rates are determined by the amount of water used during the billing period. The current minimum bill for metered sewer usage is $40.04 for the usage of your first 100 cubic feet of water. Any amount over 100 cubic feet is at a discounted rate of $11.02 per 100 cubic feet. The unmetered rate for sewers is $41.04 plus $12.52 per additional resident. As of July 2021, there has been an automatic .5 percent increase in price each fiscal year to ensure the utility systems perform well and are maintained. Whether a resident uses the metered or unmetered billing system is their own choice.

PRIVATE UTILITY SERVICES

While Roland provides many essential services; private utilities also play a vital role in the community. To start, Cable TV service is available from either Stratford Mutual Telephone (local company) or DIRECTV (national company). Both options offer different packages depending on residents' desired channels and price points. Internet and home phone services are offered by various companies, including Stratford Mutual Telephone, Windstream, HughesNet, and Frontier. For natural gas and electricity, Alliant Energy provides services to Roland residents. The company has a large presence in Iowa and Wisconsin and provides manageable payments on its website. Lastly, garbage is handled by Stone Sanitation which allows residents one trash bin provided by Stone Sanitation or up to four 30-gallon garbage cans and/or bags per week for the monthly fee of $13.85.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Roland Fire Department is a volunteer service equipped to respond to emergencies, including fire, storm damage, kids locked in cars, and car crashes. Roland's fire department is located at 202 E. Ash Street. The department consists of 16 volunteer firefighters and covers the southern part of Scott Township, Howard Township (excluding the Western part), and the northern part of Milford Township[6].

Although the Roland Fire Department has sufficient staff, the amount of time each member can commit to being available when the emergency pager goes off is an issue. Finding people that can volunteer their time, complete training, and receive calls at any time, day or night, is very difficult. Volunteers must also be trained to enter a structure fire and must meet a certain number of qualification hours (at least 110 hours of training). Firefighters have 12 meetings a year, with additional training occurring on select Saturdays throughout the year. Aside from the issue of finding staff, it isn't easy to have people ready to respond during the day because Roland is a bedroom community. Many Roland residents work out of town during the day, making it difficult to have volunteer firefighters on hand.

The Roland fire department is on a lean but adequate budget like many rural communities but which is a growing concern considering the price of firefighting gear has sharply increased in recent years. It costs almost $3500 to outfit one firefighter with personal protective equipment (bunker coat, bunker pants, boots, helmet, gloves, and hood). The fire department could also benefit from expanding the current station, which was built in 1963. Since then, the station has required more equipment and the newer truck models are larger.

The fire department handles a variety of fire types. These range from small grass fires to multi-acre field fires, vehicle fires, and house fires. Last year, the department responded to 58 requests. For larger fires, Story County Dispatch will dispatch three fire departments to a structure fire to help improve the response and minimize the need for someone to ask for more help which normally takes place several minutes after the initial call-out. While Roland deals with various types of fires, fire hydrants, shown in Figure 6.3, are sufficiently placed throughout Roland and provide adequate water for extinguishing fires.

Figure 6.3: *Roland Fire Hydrant Map*

Source: Created by Roland Public Works.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Roland has a strong relationship with Story County, where Story County can fulfill emergency services that are not offered by the City of Roland. For Emergency Medical Services, the Roland Response Team is designated as Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-B) level responder and is dispatched by the Story County Sheriff's Office when medical services are needed. Last year, the Roland Response Team was dispatched 73 times and has 11 members. For emergency medical needs, Roland does not have an ambulance within the city. Story County has five ambulances–any of which can be dispatched to the area when needed. The nearest hospital for medical emergencies is Mary Greeley Medical Center, located at 1111 Duff Avenue in Ames.

Located 20 minutes south of Roland, policing is carried out by the Story County Sheriff Department, which Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald leads. When dispatched to Roland, the Story County police work to "ensure public safety through the implementation of professional and proactive law enforcement services and to build trust by maintaining the highest standards of performance, integrity, and ethics." Contracted services include:

1. Radar operations to control speed.
2. Issuing violations under city ordinances (excluding animal control ordinances) upon request.
3. Housing inmates who have been incarcerated under a city ordinance.
4. Service of abatement notices on request.
5. Periodically checking commercial buildings for unlocked doors and trespassers.
6. Investigation of traffic accidents and complaints.
7. Dispatching of city fire departments and first responders.
8. Staffing a 24-hour E911 dispatch center.
9. Providing a detective division to investigate crimes and conduct ongoing investigations.
10. Investigating drug-related offenses.
11. Supplying schools or community clubs with officers and materials for special programs and talks upon request.
12. Supplying fully equipped patrol cars with radio, lights, siren and all related equipment, gasoline and oil, tires and maintenance, uniforms, and other personal equipment[9].

Common reasons for police presence in Roland include traffic complaints, parking complaints, assaults, and domestic assaults, traffic offenses (OWI, speed, reckless driving, etc.), DOA (death investigations), proactive patrol, and issues in the school, noise complaints, and suspicious activity.

Aside from visits related to crime, the Story County Sheriff's Office work proactively with Roland residents to address concerns and issues in their community. An assigned patrol deputy serves as a direct point of contact for Roland. This deputy attends monthly city council meetings to provide updates and address questions/concerns. The police also maintain relationships with the schools and participate in town celebration days/parades. Overall, the City of Roland has had success with its ongoing relationship with Story County police since 1988 and plans to continue to nourish the relationship into the future.

PARKS AND RECREATION

In any city, parks and recreation are vital because they provide green space, wildlife, and a place for community members to be active and participate in activities, especially for children. The City of Roland has several recreational parks for people to enjoy. These parks include Britson Park and Athletic Complex, Erickson Park, Jacobson Bear Creek Park, and Pool Park. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, a city should have between 6.25 and 10.5 acres of park and open space per 1,000 people. Roland exceeds this expectation with over 18.63 total acres of park/recreation land, which is a good thing for a city of this size that is looking to grow. Roland currently has a population of 1,362 as of the 2020 census and is anticipated to grow and expand.
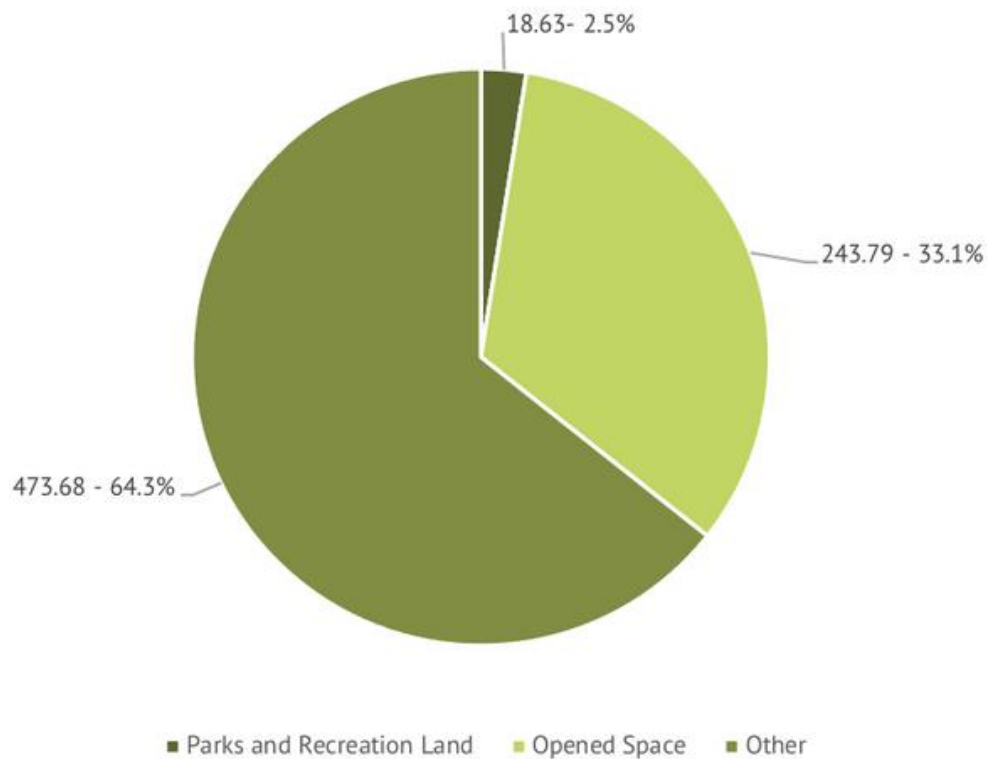

Figure 6.4: *Roland Pull Factor Analysis*

Source: Roland Retail Trade Analysis Report, 2019

Each park is somewhat unique and provides the community with different amenities that serve a different but essential purpose for the community. With various activities including playgrounds, trails, baseball fields, and a pool, Roland offers residents an opportunity for various recreational activities.

Britson Park and Athletic Complex is Roland's newest park, built-in 2009. It consists of 7.63 acres It is in west Roland off of Arthur Drive, west of Britson Circle, and south of West Maple Street. The complex contains two softball/little league baseball fields, a playground, and a large open area soccer field. The park was funded by donations coming from both the Minnesota Twins and Kansas City Royals to construct the athletic complex's baseball fields. The Britson Park and Athletic Complex include concession stands, a storage building, and a restroom building.

Erickson Park is one of the more popular parks in Roland, consisting of 5 acres of land near East Maple Street and North Park Street. The properties of Ryan Circle to the west also border the park's land. The park contains two open shelter houses, an enclosed shelter house, a playground area, picnic tables, grills, a tot lot, a concession stand (used during softball games), and the Bill Hennessy Field, which consists of two softball fields, shelter houses, playgrounds, and volleyball court. The open shelter houses are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The enclosed shelter house must be rented to be used. The shelter house can be rented year- round, but March to September seems to be the most popular time to rent out the enclosed shelter, with pricing varying by month.

Jacobson Bear Creek Park consists of 3.7 acres and is the only designated "nature park" in the City of Roland. It contains a gazebo and a nine-hole disc golf area that is frequently used by residents and visitors in the spring and summer seasons. Many of the trees and shrubs that are native to the area are labeled throughout the park. Bear Creek runs along the western edge of the park and is a tributary of the South Skunk River connecting to Ames to the south, and to Radcliffe to the north.

Pool Park is 2.3 acres in size and is located along West Maple Street and Norseman Drive. Pool Park contains the city's swimming pool, a basketball court, tennis court, pickleball court, playground, and picnic tables. This area is by far the park that the people of Roland are most proud of and one of the things that make Roland special. The pool contains a diving board and a pool basketball net. It is also easier for older people and children to enter the pool because of the zero-depth entry. These updates were implemented in 2020[11].

POOL

In the mid-2010s, Roland conducted a community survey to determine the amount of support for a pool remodel. 80 percent of the community supported the remodel. The proposed remodel was kept simple to not over-promise any big modifications. The goal of the most recent remodel in 2019 was to create a functional pool by fixing problems with gutters, cracks, pipe leaks, heater issues, electrical,

Figure 6.4: *Blueprint of 2019 Pool Update Source: Ames Tribune.*

problems, fencing, chemical controller, and lifeguard chairs. Another great thing the new pool remodel emphasized was Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards by creating a zero-depth entry for easy access to the pool. This feature is especially useful for toddlers and older folks so that it is much easier for them to enter the pool. The remodeling effort was encouraged predominantly by young families to provide a fun, safe, and accessible environment for their kids in the community[12].

The pool in Roland is simple and great for little kids. There is a pool in Story City which has slides and other activities for older kids. The Roland pool is located within "Pool Park," which includes the swimming pool, basketball court, tennis court, pickleball court, playground, and picnic tables that are accessible for people of all ages. The swimming pool features a diving board, a "Fumbling Five" bucket dump, a deep-end, usable concession area, and a mushroom water feature.

In order to maintain the pool to its full potential, there are fees associated with its use:
Individual Pass:
    Roland resident $60, Out of town $65
    Family Pass: Roland resident $130, Out of town $140 (One additional person may be added to your family pass for $40).
    Daily Admission $3.50 (3 and up)
    10 Punch pass $30
    Public swim lessons - $35/child or Private lessons: $60 1 child, $110 2 children

SIDEWALKS AND WALKABILITY

Sidewalks are important because they allow people to safely move about the community safely and walkability is a growing economic development tool in community planning.

Sidewalks around areas with a higher concentration of pedestrians and, most importantly, areas with children are essential for the safety of a community. The community survey results revealed that many Roland residents would like high-quality sidewalks and are concerned about existing sidewalks throughout the city. Additionally, residents were asked at the Open House event to mark areas in Roland where the sidewalks are sufficient, need improvement, or are missing. In order to address citizen concerns and mark areas that need sidewalk improvement/additions, a map was created that details sidewalk conditions throughout Roland, see Figure 6.5.

The sidewalk condition survey used the same criteria as the open house sidewalk map: green where sidewalks are sufficient (no change needed), yellow where sidewalks need to be improved (cracking/crumbling or uneven), and red where the sidewalk is missing. Areas near parks and the middle school should be of higher priority for future improvement due to increased pedestrian traffic in these areas. If these areas are missing sidewalks, many safety issues arise, especially when school lets out or if there is an event at one of the parks.

Figure 6.5: Sidewalk Condition Analysis

Source: Created by author.

TRAFFIC COUNTS AND COMMUTE TIME

Major road arteries in Roland pull not only local traffic by pass thru from neighboring rural areas and smaller communities. Most of these vehicles drive on E18 (Maple Street) at 2430 vehicles per day. The busiest part of Cottonwood Street (North of Maple Street) generates 950- 990 vehicles daily. Thirdly, Main Street gets 770 vehicles per day, and Main Street between Ash and Walnut Streets gets 180 vehicles a day. E-18 (Maple Street) Cottonwood Street and Main Street would be good places for development in terms of commuter traffic through Roland's city.

People commute to several different locations every day from Roland. The most common destinations are Story City, Ames, and Nevada. It is approximately an 11-minute drive from Roland to Story City, which is where the closest grocery stores and restaurants are located. It is 20 minutes to drive to Ames from Roland, which is where many Roland residents work and the location of the closest hospital. It is a 17-minute drive to Nevada, which is the county seat. Des Moines is a 47-minute drive, which is the location of the state capitol, and the closest international airport is located. Ankeny is a 36-minute drive, a location where some of Roland's residents work and has many restaurants and shops closer to Des Moines[13].

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

Roland is almost exclusively car-dependent, resulting in Roland's roads' high usage by both residents and visitors. Several major roads surround Roland and go through the town itself. The city is located 3 miles east of I-35 and 2 miles west of S14 (620th Avenue). To the north, Roland borders E18 (115th Street). To the south, it borders 140th Street. The two major roads that go through the town include Cottonwood Street (600th Street), which runs north/southward, and Maple Street (E18), which runs east/west.
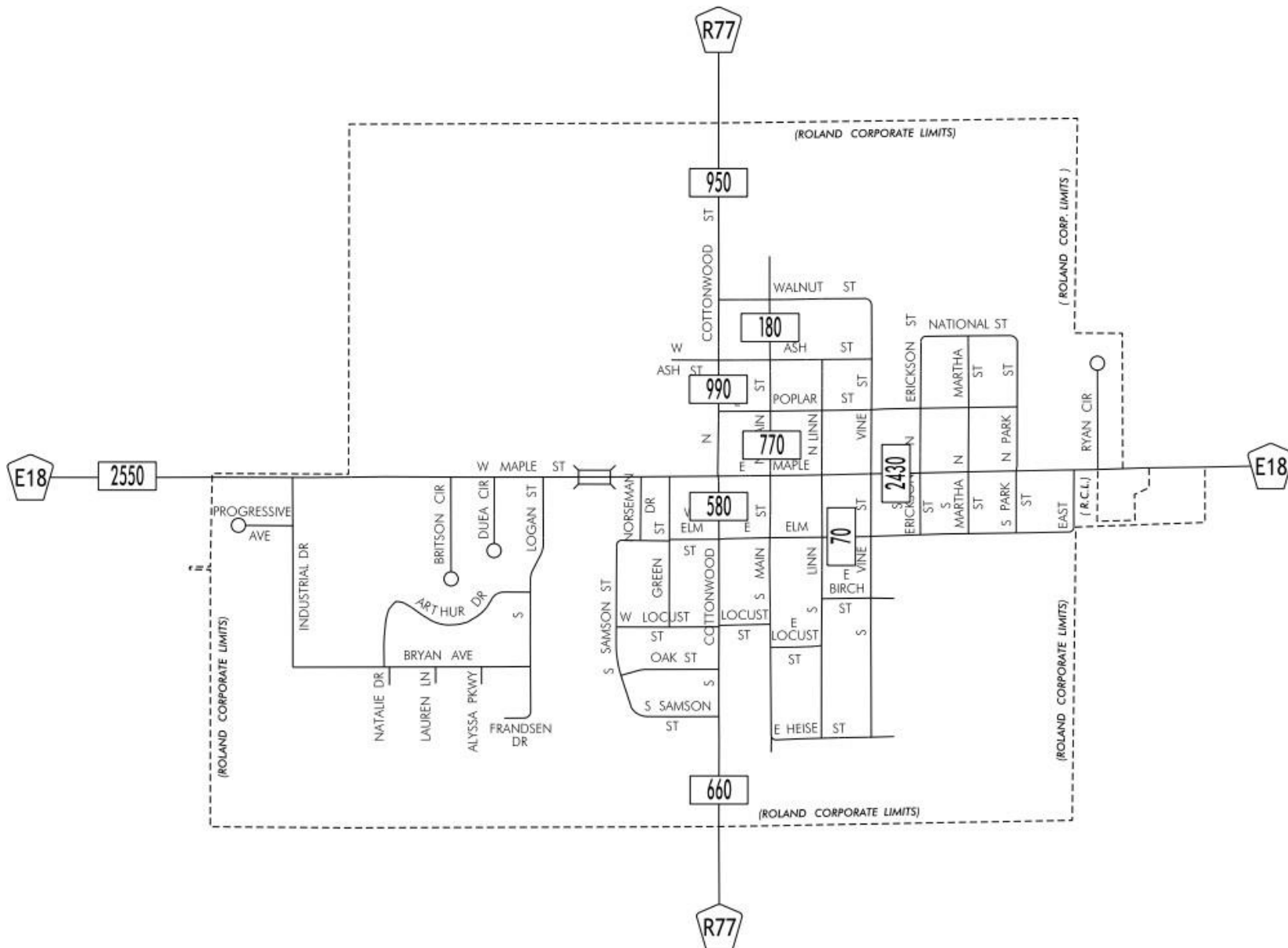
Figure 6.6: *2019 Annual Average Traffic Counts in Roland*

Source: *2019 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts (Iowa DOT)*
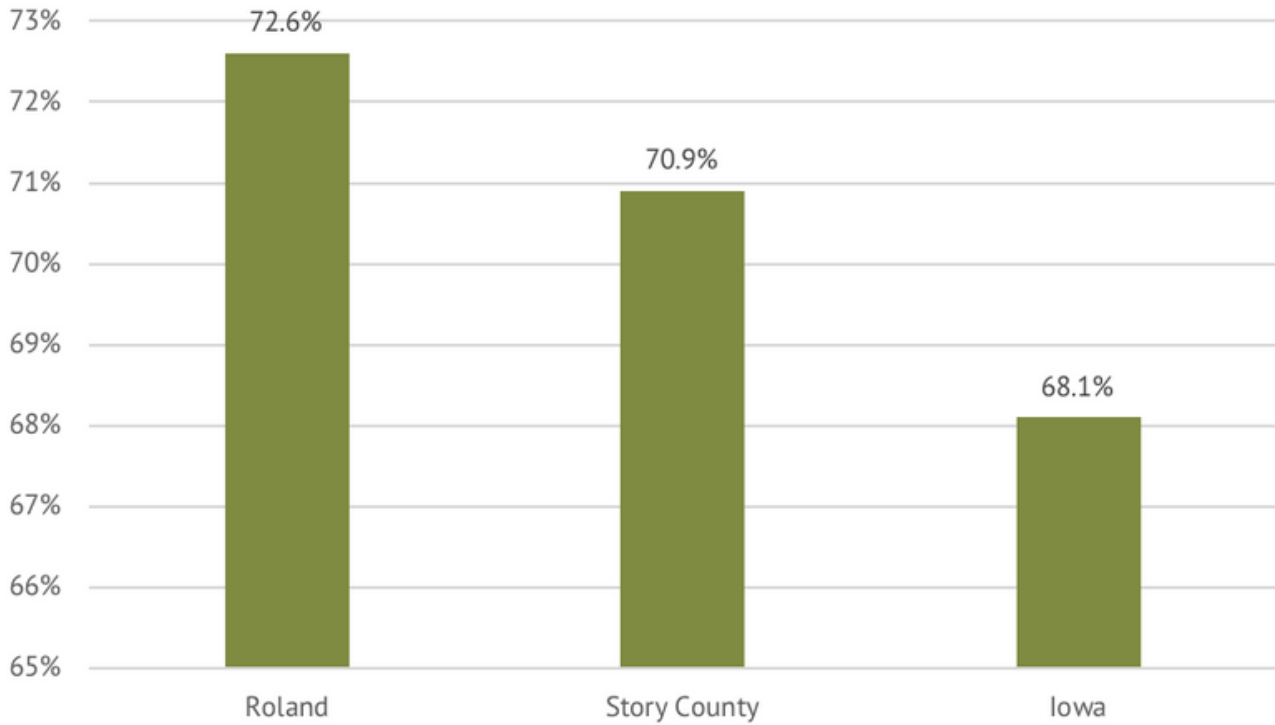
Figure 6.7: *2019 Annual Average Traffic Counts in Roland*

Source: 2019 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts (Iowa DOT)

The roads that the local government of Roland maintains are paved. Most of the dirt or non-paved roads are maintained by local farmers who own lands that intersect with the town. According to the survey, most of the residents (76 percent) said that they felt transportation was adequate throughout Roland. However, 24 percent of residents desire a bus to travel from Roland 1-2 times per day to take residents to Ames and/or Story City to facilitate shopping. Many of the responses identified senior citizens as the main demographic that would use the buses. The most plausible way this could be done is through CyRide's EASE program. However, EASE does not reach Roland, and CyRide is struggling to find employees to drive buses on many of the existing EASE routes.

Within the last five years, the bridge on East Maple Street coming into Roland going over Bear Creek has been renovated and is up-to-date on safety measures

LIBRARY

To promote lifelong learning in the City of Roland, the public library provides various resources for the community. The Roland Public Library is a 4,700 square foot building located in the downtown area at 221 Main Street. The library's mission statement is, "To provide access to the universe of information through promoting reading, literacy, technology, and local programming that best serves the community." The library is open 51 hours a week, from Monday to Saturday. To keep the library at a high standard, a full-time library director, a part-time children's librarian/program director, and two library clerks maintain the space. There are currently 709 active cardholders, including patrons from the rural area and other communities, including Story City, and McCallsburg, for example.

The library receives most of its funding for annual operating expenses from the city's general fund and Story County. State funding is $2,000-$3,000 annually and is calculated based on usage and accreditation. The library also receives donations and memorial gifts, which funded a large portion of the 2017 backroom project.

The library currently has more than 17,000 physical items available for circulation, including 4,542 easy books (picture books, learning-to-read, early literacy), 3,505 junior fiction and non-fiction books, 705 young adult fiction and non-fiction books, 6,133 fiction and non-fiction books designated as adult reading, 175 books on CD (audiobooks), and 2,687 DVDs. Aside from a wide assortment of reading materials and DVDs for people of all ages, the library offers public access to four computers with fax, printing, copying, and scanning capabilities, for a small fee. There are four tablets available for public use and five e-readers available for circulation. Library patrons can also sign up for eBook and audiobook access through the Bridges program on the Roland library website (https://www.roland.lib.ia.us/).

Additionally, the library offers complimentary Wi-Fi and an extensive program schedule. Outreach services are offered upon request for home delivery and early literacy programs. The library also serves as a programming area for community activities and offers a meeting room for reservations up to six months in advance. Community members interested in using the meeting space can speak to a librarian or call the library. Events that take place in the space include a weekly preschool (early literacy) Storytime and special events programming such as our annual Holiday Open House (with a visit from Santa) and a Halloween Monster Mash (games and refreshments for families before Trick or Treating). The rental fee for a non-profit organization - no charge, private/profit group - is $15 (4 hours) or $25 (all day). A refundable $25 deposit is required and a $100 per hour cleaning fee if the room is left disorderly. The programming area allows the library to host programs and meetings with 60-75 people seated comfortably. The entire library can accommodate up to 150 people for larger community events.

The library also offers a craft space utilized weekly by the Craft Club. The Craft Club promotes different and fun crafts for grades K-6. There are crafts offered for all age groups and all lengths of time, and kids may take their creations home. Another way the library offers fun, hands-on activities is through the Iowa Libraries Adventure Pass. The pass is an online program that allows community members to use their library cards to visit various attractions, museums, and parks for free. The Roland Public Library currently has passes available to the Blank Park Zoo, Reiman Gardens, and the Science Center of Iowa. Passes are available at all times through the Roland library website, and reservations can be made up to 90 days in advance.

While the library has many beneficial programs and resources, the Roland Public Library Strategic Plan 2020-2023 provides goals and objectives for the future of the library. The library would like to continue expanding its community presence and expanding internet/technology access. Additionally, the library hopes to expand programming opportunities to people of all ages and interests. Lastly, the library hopes to continue encouraging the use of online resources, including databases and online book services.

Compared to ten years ago, the circulation of physical items was the primary standard used to measure the library's success. While those numbers are still important, the library now also considers program/event attendance and how the community uses the facilities. We believe the need for more storage space could be emphasized in the future library plan. Full kitchen accommodations and an expanded programming space are also important to consider with the growth of Roland. Currently, the library is scheduled to reapply for accreditation in early 2023, and as part of that process, the library strategic plan will be revised/rewritten.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The City of Roland is within the boundaries of the Roland-Story School District. Shown in Figure 6.8, the school district was consolidated in 1969 and covers an area of approximately 51 square miles and includes the communities of Story City, Harrison Township, Lafayette Township, and Howard Township, in addition to Roland, as referenced in the map below. The district extends into northeast Boone County, southeastern Hamilton County, far southwest Hardin County, and northern Story County. The Roland-Story refers to the two cities where the schools are located for the school district. The elementary and high schools for the district are located in Story City, and the middle school (Roland-Story Middle School) for the district is located in Roland.

Resident feedback on the community survey and at the Open House in April 2022 was positive when referring to the schools. Citizens emphasized that they want to raise their children in a small-town environment with a good school system. Many were also proud of the Roland-Story School District. Some older citizens have also expressed that the school has improved in terms of college readiness in the last 40 years.
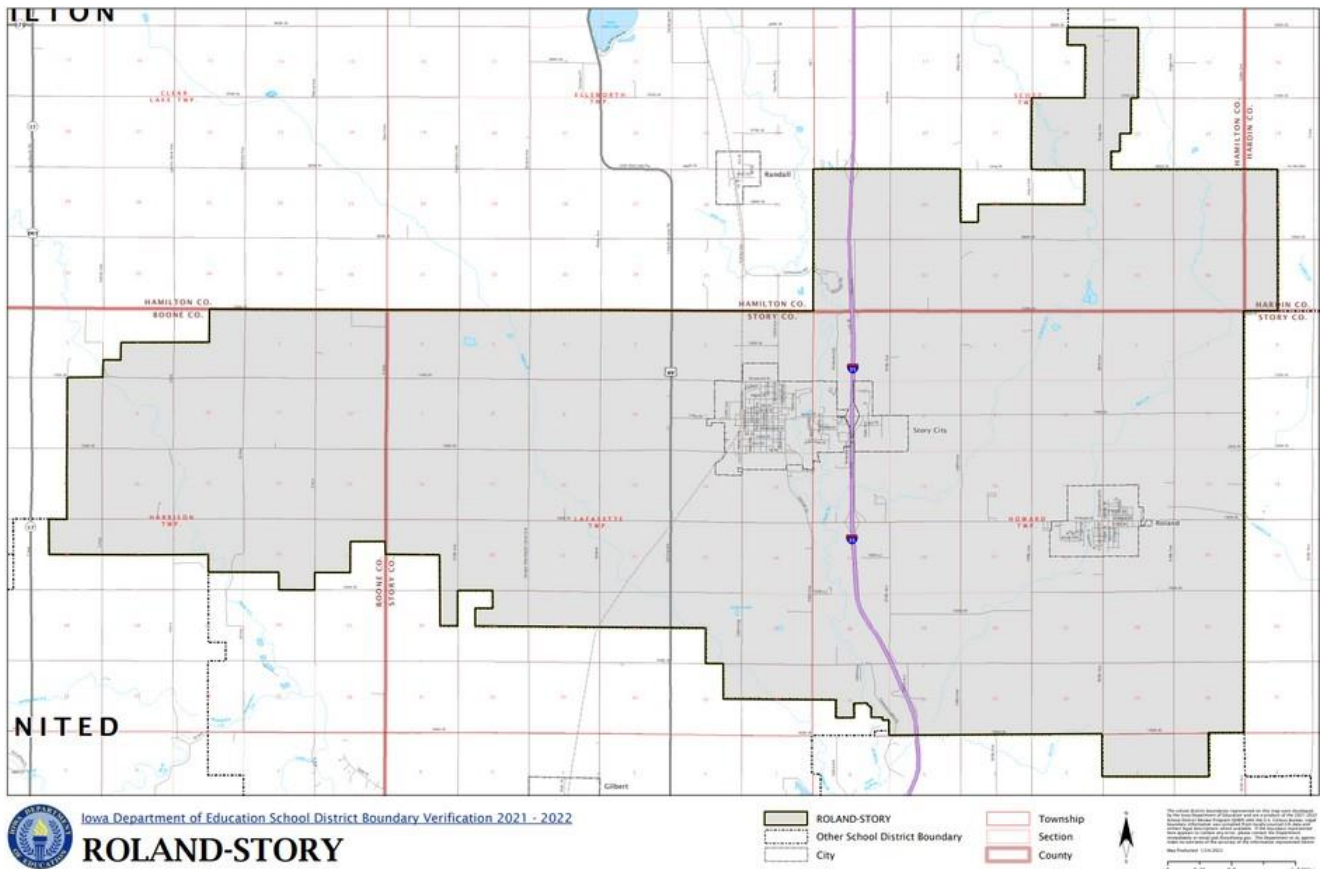
Figure 6.8: *Roland-Story District Boundaries*

Source: Iowa Department of Education School District Boundary Verification 2021 - 2022 (Roland-Story)

There is also one elementary school within the district, Roland-Story Elementary, located at 900 Hillcrest Drive in Story City. Roland-Story Elementary serves PK to 4th grade, with a current enrollment of 373 students. A rough estimate of the capacity for Roland-Story Elementary School is 500 students.

Roland-Story School District has schools located throughout the district. The Roland-Story Middle School is located at 206 South Main Street in Roland. The current Middle School was built in 1987 and served grades 5 to 8. Current enrollment at the middle school is 307 students, with a student-to-teacher ratio of 21:1, which is above the state average of 14:1. Roughly, Roland-Story Middle School has a maximum capacity of 400 students.

Roland-Story High School is located at 1009 Story Street in Story City. The current school building broke ground in 1991 and consisted of two phases, with the first being completed in January of 1992 and containing the office area and new locker rooms on the lower level and science, home economics, and three-second floor classrooms. The second phase included the kitchen, commons, instructional material, six-second floor classrooms, a new band, vocal rooms, and the auditorium, and was available for occupancy in January 1993. Remodeling efforts for the gym, additional classrooms, and locker rooms were completed during the summer of 1993. Roland-Story High School serves grades 9-12. Current enrollment is 336 students, with a student-to-teacher ratio of 17:1, which is above the Iowa State average of 14:1. Roland-Story High School has a maximum capacity of 400 students from our estimates.

The Roland-Story School District is ranked above the State of Iowa average in every category measured by the Iowa Department of Education. Roland performs well in Assessment Participation in English Language Arts (99th percentile), Assessment Participation in Mathematics (99th percentile), College Readiness (88th percentile), English- Language Arts Proficiency (84th percentile), and Mathematics Proficiency (80th percentile).

CONCLUSION

Public facilities and transportation encompass a wide range of important functions vital for a community to function effectively. When looking at Roland, water and sewer facilities are scheduled to be improved through the ARPA grant, and private utilities will continue to provide adequate services. The fire department and emergency services are suitable for Roland now but need to be monitored and enhanced given the possibility of future population growth. Roland offers a wide variety of parks, including the pool, making Roland a great recreation community. Roland provides good road connectivity as a car-dependent community but could use improvements/additions to sidewalks. Lastly, Roland offers an excellent library and school system that promotes well-rounded education for youth and lifelong learning. In the next section, land use will detail how land is being used in Roland now and what the land uses could look like in the future.

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LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Land use refers to the way land is being used and is defined by the activities that occur on the land. Land uses that can coexist adjacent or in close proximity to one another without any negative or harmful consequences are beneficial to the community at large. Land use patterns can also be used to support a community's goals, including goals related to population growth and composition, quality of life, economics, environmental sustainability, and enhancing a sense of community. Land use not only indicates how land within the city is used, but it also often determines who will have access to the land. It also describes how the land is currently being used and identifies how much land is available for future development in terms of specific uses and in which locations. The current land use map (Figure 7.1) illustrates the city's development pattern as it exists now, which in turn influences the land use pattern in the future.

Roland is a community with quality neighborhoods, public services, and recreational opportunities. New land use and community challenges will continue to present themselves as the community matures and grows.

Current vacant property or property in other uses within city limits (may) provide residential growth opportunities but the community to rely only on this option limiting all growth if current property owners have no interest in selling or developing it.

With the adoption of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Roland will be looking to review all zoning and Future Land Use in surrounding areas as well to best compile community wide opportunities and not rely only on avenue of future economic growth. This will also work will in combination with specific Downtown Targets the community will be focusing on in 2024-25 along with new Urban Blight Designation and retirement of current bond debts the next several years.

ROLAND
LAND USE
- CURRENT -

Legend:
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Public & Quasi Public
- Single-Family
- 2+ Family
- Industrial
- Parks & Recreation

ERICKSON PARK

E Maple St

N Cottonwood St

Roland

POOL PARK

JACOBSON BEAR CREEK PARK

W Maple St

BRITSON PARK AND ATHLETIC COMPLEX

130th St

N

0   0.09   0.18   0.37 Miles
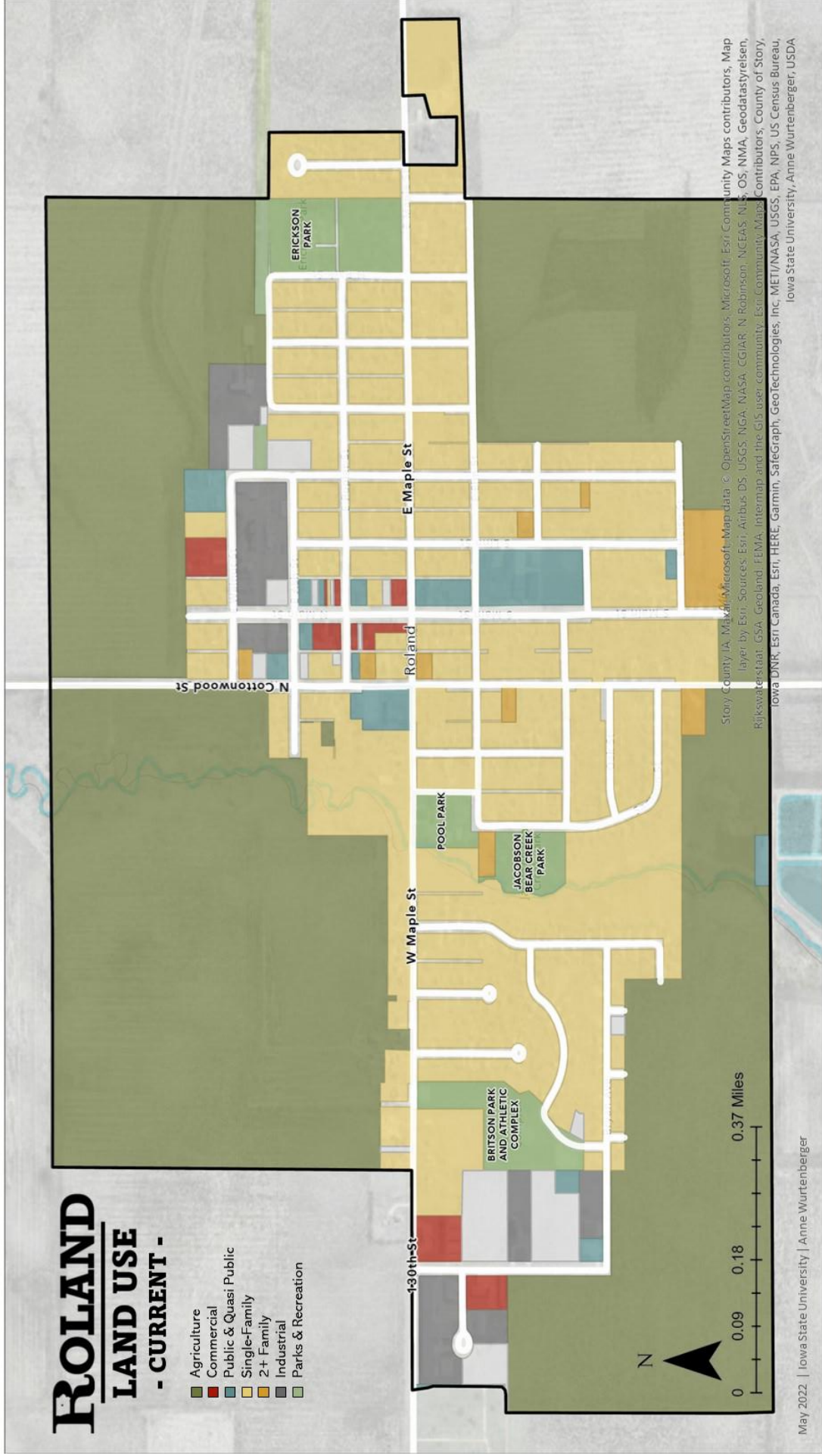
Story County IA Made in Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri. Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Esri Community Maps Contributors, County of Story, Iowa DNR, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, Iowa State University, Anne Wurtenberger, USDA

May 2022 | Iowa State University | Anne Wurtenberger

Figure 7.1

CURRENT LAND USE

A Land-Use Inventory was developed for the City of Roland (Figure 7.1). This land-use inventory map identifies existing land uses and development patterns which exist within the City of Roland.

Seven Land-Use categories were identified in this inventory:
  ⬦ **Vacant:** Land currently having no purpose and is not developed.
  ⬦ **Agriculture:** Land used for any farming practice- crops and/or livestock.
  ⬦ **Residential:**
    ○ **Single-Family:** Land used for single-family dwellings.
    ○ **Two or more families:** Land used for two-family or more dwellings.
  ⬦ **Commercial:** Land used for profit through growing, processing, or manufacturing of products and/or services
  ⬦ **Public and Quasi Public:**
    ○ **Public:** Available for the public and typically federally or state-owned.
    ○ **Quasi Public:** Land used for/by a nonprofit, religious, or eleemosynary institution or group.
    ○ *Examples: City Hall, Library, Schools, Public Works, Emergency Services, Public Storage*
  ⬦ **Industrial:** Land used for production, manufacturing, or distribution of goods, or alternatively for mining and/or drilling purposes.
  ⬦ **Parks and Recreation:** Natural or landscaped land occasionally with structures to be used recreationally by citizens.
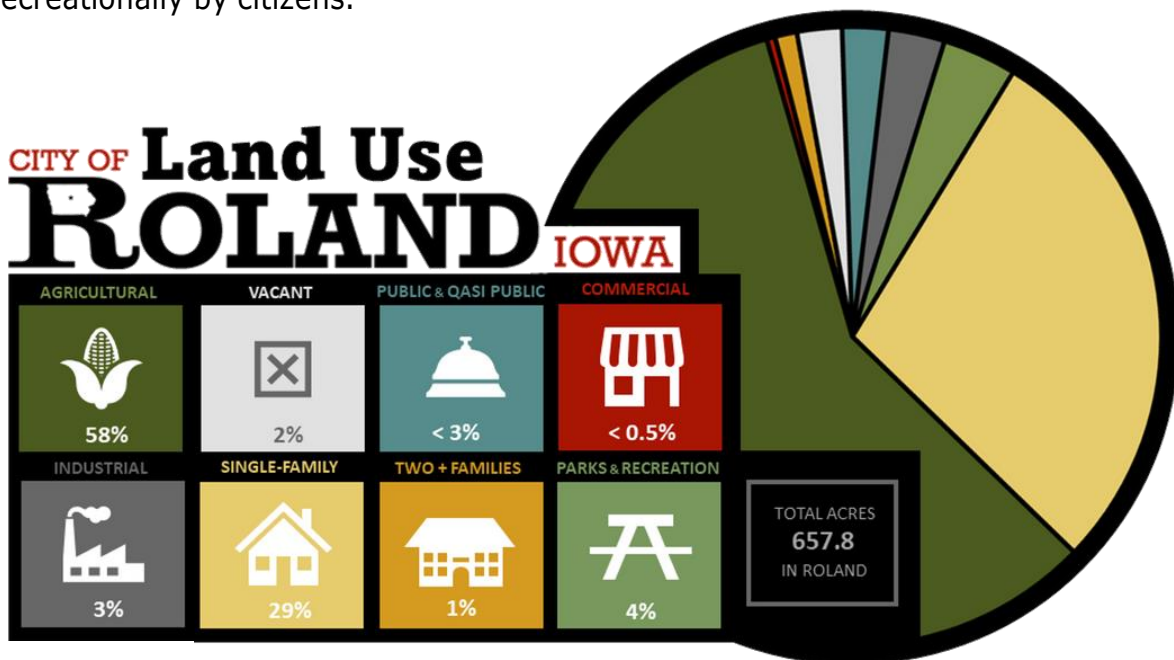
Figure 7.2: Roland Land Use

COMMUNITY SURVEY OPINIONS

While preparing the four scenarios for future land use, understanding what the citizens of Roland wanted to see change and grow in their community was crucial. After conducting the Roland Community Survey, citizen responses were reviewed, and commonalities were identified in both community interests and concerns.

Figure 7.3: Community Survey Responses

CHAPTER 8
**GOALS,
RECOMMENDATIONS,
& IMPLEMENTATION**

INTRODUCTION

The following section discusses the goals of the comprehensive plan, the objectives that make up each goal, as well as recommended courses of action for the community to pursue to assist with plan implementation. Broadly, a goal is an overarching theme or desired endpoint, while objectives are the action items to be addressed throughout the process of achieving a goal. The goals and objectives laid out in this section were informed by input gathered from community leaders and residents, developed with feasibility in mind, and revised based on feedback obtained from the community. Following the goals and objectives, the recommendations portion of this chapter details a variety of financial and educational resources as well as specific tasks for the city to consider while implementing this plan.

GOAL: Promote economic development by revitalizing the downtown, and by providing suitable buildings and sites for commercial and industrial development.

OBJECTIVE: Direct commercial development in the downtown in order to keep the downtown viable and reduce land use incompatibility.

OBJECTIVE: By 2024, create full zoning updates community wide along with Future Land Use Plan.

OBJECTIVE: By 2024, begin applying for appropriate grants/funding for improving downtown aesthetics, building facades, and unsafe buildings.

OBJECTIVE: By 2025, in partnership with Story County develop, adopt, and enforce a building maintenance code for all structures in the city, including commercial buildings, to ensure that they remain viable and attractive as possible business locations.

OBJECTIVE: By 2027 expand commercial zoning and land uses to provide more sites for new businesses to locate and to accommodate business expansions.

GOAL: Encourage economic development to accommodate expected future population growth.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage and maintain a housing growth rate that supports the anticipated population growth consisting of approximately an additional 70 housing units by 2030 and an additional 40 housing units by 2040.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the development of additional housing for senior citizens.

OBJECTIVE: By 2024, publish potential developable commercial and industrial sites and buildings on the Story County Website.

OBJECTIVE: By 2026, in conjunction with the Ames Chamber/EDC develop incentives or marketing information to attract developers and businesses to the city to increase both residential and commercial growth.

GOAL: Continually improve infrastructure and public services to enhance safety and quality of life.

OBJECTIVE: Expand sewer and water systems to accommodate expected growth and development.

OBJECTIVE: By 2030, improve sidewalk conditions and connectivity throughout the community.

GOAL: Preserve and enhance the small-town character of Roland.

OBJECTIVE: By 2024, improve and expand communication channels between city institutions and the general public.

OBJECTIVE: By 2025, develop and adopt simple design standards for structures located within downtown Roland to enhance the community's aesthetics.

OBJECTIVE: By 2025, partner with other community institutions to host two community-wide events annually to bring the community together and promote community outreach and volunteerism.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the restoration and establishment of natural areas with native plant communities to provide and preserve wildlife habitat throughout the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

COMMUNICATION

The maintenance and proliferation of efficient, effective communication channels between government and its stakeholders is a critical part of achieving a plan's goals and cultivating an effective working relationship with the community's stakeholders: its citizens. From the community survey, participants reported feeling disconnected from their local government and identified a desire for more options to receive information regarding decision-making and current events, for instance.

In 2023 there have never been as many means of communication available between government and its citizens. However, it is also recognized that with limited City staff, there can only be so much done by the City of Roland alone and it is urgently recommended to the entire community of Roland to be aware and utilize the communication tools available to contact their local government elected officials and workers when needed on their own initiative.

To facilitate more open access to public information, the City of Roland's Facebook feed could be embedded onto the homepage of the city's official website. Given that access to Facebook is restricted to only those possessing an account, individuals lacking access are excluded from viewing information posted to that platform. By embedding the feed onto the city's official website, all posts made to Facebook by the City of Roland will also be viewable by everyone, regardless of whether they are Facebook users or not. This also would help to ensure that the communication and messages are consistent between the two platforms.

In addition, the city may wish to advertise the fact that the digital sign near Casey's is available for organizations to use when wishing to reach residents of the community. Although the sign is understood to be owned by the Roland Area Development Corporation, it remains an asset to facilitating open lines of communication and building cohesion through information sharing.

Finally, to further improve communication throughout the community at large, the city could increase the frequency of newsletters mailed to residents throughout the year. This not only aids with information sharing, but also with building a sense of community by demonstrating the city's intention to regularly engage with its residents.

COOPERATION

To effectively follow through with the plan and meet its goals, the city must be cognizant of the resources available to it as well as how to put those resources to work. One specific resource to be taken further advantage of by the city is the Ames Chamber of Commerce. By increasing the frequency and depth of the city's communications with the Ames Chamber, a greater sense of cooperation will be established between the two entities. Keeping the Ames Chamber regularly involved in the execution of this plan will help to pull outside resources into the community and aid in achieving the plan's goal of promoting economic development.

From the community survey result, many people commented upon a desire to volunteer and expressed a desire to get involved and play an active role in making Roland a great place to live. However, many residents were unsure how they could be involved. As a result, we recommend the city consider providing opportunities for residents to be engaged in community activities and improvements. Some suggestions received from the community survey include planting trees throughout the city to replace those that were damaged by the 2020 derecho. This could an activity whereby the city partners with other community organizations as a means to attract volunteers and assist with organizing activities.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

A common theme across this comprehensive plan is the desire for public infrastructure to be a priority for Roland. Both the community engagement results and our formal planning process showed that the sidewalks, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure and maintenance should be priorities for the city going forward.

One project that should be prioritized should be the update and continuous maintenance of the stormwater system and the sewer systems. As the community survey results revealed, there are a number of issues in the community that relate to the deteriorating condition of the water systems in the city. The stormwater system is currently about 50 years past its projected useful life. Minor flooding in the parks, clogged drains across the community that citizens are needing to clear themselves, and even major potential flooding areas in the south of Roland where housing is projected to go need to be addressed. The sewer system also needs to expand as the city expands, to accommodate and support future development. To assist with these needs there is a Community Development Block Grant that Roland qualifies for that would provide Roland with funds for sewer and stormwater improvements and maintenance.

GRANDFATHERING CURRENT LAND USES

Neighboring the northern side of Roland's downtown in the commercial area are some industrial land uses. These activities present a land-use conflict with the commercial and residential uses within downtown and the general surrounding area. Over time, this can make new commercial and residential development within downtown and the general surrounding area difficult, less desirable, and resist completing this plan's related goals and objectives. To encourage future industrial development to stay within the already designated and established Industrial Park located in west Roland, it is recommended that the current industrial land uses located in the northern section of the downtown be grandfathered, with the understanding that sometime in the future those industrial uses will be phased out and replaced with commercial uses. Grandfathering these industrial uses will allow these uses to continue for now but will restrict their ability to expand in the future. This will, in the long term, help to promote the downtown as a commercial area and a community gathering space and reduce land use conflicts in the future.

DEVELOPMENT OF A FUTURE LAND USE & FRINGE PLAN

The Roland City Council expressed an interest in the development of a fringe plan in the future as one of the plan's objectives. A fringe plan currently exists for the City of Ames because Ames is anticipated to experience considerable growth over the next 20 years and the issue of overlapping jurisdictions and inconsistent land use policies that could arise due to any growth occurring outside of Ames extends into the 2-mile planning area of Gilbert, Boone, and Kelly. However, the circumstances for Roland are very different than in the case of Ames. With growth not being a pressing issue and fully utilizing a new Fringe Plan it is recommended that the goal of such an effort be included in more urgent needs such as Future Land Use, Zoning Review and Urban Blight targets etc.

Under Iowa law cities have the authority to regulate and govern the land within their city boundaries. It is the authority of county governments to regulate land uses outside the city limits. However, the Code of Iowa also enables cities to exercise control over subdivision of land outside, but within two miles of, their corporate boundaries. The City of Roland in Chapter 170 of the City Code –Subdivision Control, has identified that it intends to exercise review and approval of all subdivisions outside the outside the corporate limits based upon "the same standards and conditions used for review and approval of subdivisions within the City limits," and we encourage the City of Roland to utilize and exercise these rights if such circumstances should arise. In terms of guidance, the city's Planning and Zoning Board and City Council when conducting such a review should consider whether any such developments could/should be annexed into the city in the future, and if the city has the fiscal resources necessary, as well as the desire to extend city services to these developments at the time of construction. Extending services beyond the city's boundaries to development(s)located in the county would prioritize city funds for improvements to property not located within the city at the expense of investments that could be made to properties and amenities located within the city unless annexation were to occur. In addition, the expansion of city services, such as water and sewer, is expensive and would impact the fiscal health and decision making of the community for many years. Conducting a cost/revenue analysis should be used to demonstrate the financial implications of such decisions.

FUTURE DOWNTOWN DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The list of goals include the preservation and enhancement of Roland's small-town feel. This involves keeping the downtown area the central, preferred location for commercial activity. The downtown includes the remnants of historical architecture and showcases the town's unique character. It is recommended that Roland adopt some simple design standards to ensure that future development reflects the historical look and feel of the downtown and improves community aesthetics as more resources are put into the revitalization efforts.

Some suggestions for these design standards include the use of fake brick facades for at least the street facing sides of buildings that locate in the commercial downtown. Other design recommendations include 50% of the front/street side of buildings located in the downtown should consist of transparent doors or windows. The purpose of these design guidelines is to ensure any new commercial development is attractive and compliments neighboring structures, providing a certain uniformity of scale and appearance to the downtown going forward. It is also recommended that the city consider updating their sign guidelines for the downtown so that flashing signs are not permitted and that considerations to sign height, bulk and brightness within the city ordinance are reviewed to see if they reflect the character and image of the downtown.

CONCLUSION

This portion of the comprehensive plan laid out a list of overarching goals and actionable objectives for the City of Roland to focus on, as they work toward implementing the comprehensive plan over the next 10 years. These goals and objectives aim to better the community holistically through maintaining and improving the local economy, housing stock, public infrastructure, and Roland's small-town character. The City of Roland has deep pride in their community and with public by-in towards the years ahead should provide opportunities for continued growth for future generations.