

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

COMPILATION OF INTERVIEWS



IMAGINE POLK CITY

- A Bridge to the Future -

Compilation of Key Person Interviews

2/19/2015

10 interviews included

What is Polk City's biggest asset?

RECREATION

- Recreational opportunities (x5)
- Amount of Army Corps property – good because it provides parkland and open space, but it also breaks up the community (need neighborhood connectivity to counteract that separation).

LOCATION

- Proximity to Des Moines metro area and to Ames (x2)

CITY STAFF AND COUCIL – PEOPLE!

- Staff and council, boards and commissions, people working to make Polk City a better place
- Council works well with employees. There is good teamwork.
- Friendly community
- People

OTHER

- School system has a good reputation
- Good reputation for being family friendly
- Low tax rate
- Small town feel (x3)
- Beauty of surrounding natural areas
- Infrastructure (sewer, water, streets)

Why do people want to live/work/visit here?

RECREATION

- Proximity to recreational activities (x4)
- Access to lakes (x4)
- Access to trails

LOCATION

- Commute to downtown is the same time as from western suburbs
- Everything you need is within a short drive
- Proximity to Des Moines
- Beauty and setting of the town

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Small city/town feel (x6)
- Feels safe
- Not trying to be like the suburbs (uniqueness)
- It is a “hidden gem”
- Relatively new community
- Demographics of being highly educated, high income, low median age
- Schools (x2)
- A lot of services are provided in town (don’t have to travel)
- Tax rate
- Friendliness of the community

What is Polk City’s biggest challenge over the next 20 years?

MAINTAINING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Ability to provide services for rapid growth (x2)
- Funding the maintenance of existing infrastructure (x3)
- Funding future infrastructure to supply new residents
- Keeping up with infrastructure needs
- Tax dollars won’t be enough to fund everything
- Larger homes are a bigger challenge for fire suppression
- Concern that the school will not be able to accommodate the growth (will be overcrowded) (x2)
- School taxes will need to grow
- Servicing quality of life items (sports fields and local trail)

MANAGING GROWTH

- Concern about getting landlocked
- Managing growth (people finding out about the “hidden gem”) (x4)
- Where will the growth be located?
- Finding new leadership
- Can’t lose its identity and community pride; charm of small town
- Meeting the needs/expectations of long-time residents as well as new residents
- Maintaining small town feel but allowing growth – finding a good balance
- Need for commercial development (x2)

What is Polk City's biggest opportunity over the next 20 years?

GROWTH-RELATED

- Being a nicer/faster growing suburb – “upscale”
- Maintaining quality of life
- Keeping small town feel
- Growth – more people means more opportunities
- Vacant land is being sold
- Additional commercial development will add to the tax base and provide employment opportunities
- Identifying and bringing in small businesses of 20-30 employees
- Managing our growth in a smart way
- More recreational opportunities (x2).
- People want a sense of security and belonging and close-by recreational opportunities.
- Being a destination due to the location
- Have a lot to offer during all seasons
- Small schools
- To become part of the greater metro area – play a bigger role politically

What is Polk City doing right? What works well?

STAFFING/LEADERSHIP

- City leadership (Council and staff) are/have been building infrastructure to prepare for new growth
- City government is forward thinking (thinks about public safety AND quality of life amenities)
- Teamwork between council and employees (x2)
- Communication is open between the public and elected officials and staff
- Staff and elected officials want to give citizens the best that they can
- Have equipment they need
- Watching the tax rate (x2)
- Overall management is good
- Public safety – police and fire
- Public works
- Maintenance for sewer and streets

DEVELOPMENT TYPES

- Getting well-planned, high quality building
- Land use is good
- Have learned from past development issues (ex. Accommodating parking appropriately)
- Growing at a pace that is acceptable to the established older regime (growth is slow enough)
- Infrastructure projects – Polk City doesn't have decaying sewers because we have new infrastructure. Most growth is since 1980.
- Has concentrated on infrastructure in the past (water, sewer, streets)
- Likes the direction the city is headed

- Current move to work on park and recreation amenities

What could Polk City do better?

BUDGET/MAINTENANCE

- Budgeting – maintenance of infrastructure and services
- Delaying need for additional staff will reduce essential services to the public

COMMERCIAL

- Could do commercial growth better – need this for tax base, employment, and goods and services
- Attract more commercial – restaurants, hardware, etc. (x2)

RECREATION/QUALITY OF LIFE

- Find more quality of life opportunities for residents (x2)
- Need recreational facilities (x2)
- Need programming for adult and youth (x2)
- Meet the demands of what the residents want/need (e.g. sports fields)
- Take a stronger standpoint with the schools regarding where schools are located

HOUSING

- Need to look at accommodating starter homes
- Should consider multi-family housing/apartments
- Should consider need for senior assisted living housing

OTHER

- Take some risk – push on bond issue for sports complex

How will population growth affect your department/area of expertise (or the city's ability to provide services)? What will your departmental needs be over the next 20 years?

STAFF NEEDS

- Will need more staff/catch up to staffing standards (x10)
 - o Police Staff – Midwest average for Cities under 10,000 is 2.7 sworn police officers per 1000 population (this would equal 10.7 officers; have 6)
- Will need a new fire station, but can be shared with Ankeny
- Will have more contract work (cleaning, mowing, fertilization). Some concern with a lower quality of service from contractors vs city staff
- Administrative functions – will need more staff, already stressed
- Will need a full time recreation director
- May need to create a city development department (planning, building, and engineering)
- Public works will be most challenged with overall maintenance needs
- Current leadership will make the right moves at the right times based on population and staffing needs

SPACE/FACILITY NEEDS

- Will need more building space
- Will need more space (can expand in current building if other uses move out)
- Will need more space, but can add on to existing building
- Need to have a one-stop-shop for city services
- Need to give citizens access to services and decision makers
- Current city hall facility isn't inviting (but it is historic and iconic)
- New city hall needs are not immediate – but possibility in the future
- Recreational ball fields
- Will need more water capacity and storage
- Public works maintenance facility is o.k.
- Citizens are not voicing a need for new city hall or other departmental facility

What land use and/or infrastructure needs do we need to keep in mind as we plan for additional growth in order to meet the needs of your department?

(e.g. road width for emergency vehicles / dumpster enclosures in commercial development for public works / curb and gutter for storm sewer / street lights for public safety/sufficient park land for new residential growth / landscaping/ buffers / parking lot islands / setbacks)

- Lighting in commercial areas
- addressing/street naming should carry on as their own (not county addressing)
- Polk City has good quality ordinances and development
- Sign ordinance can be re-visited (can't see business names in square due to trees)
- Curb stops being concreted in
- Manhole castings being concreted in
- Water meters are added after completion, but contractors are using water during the construction process. May use \$500 worth of water during construction (e.g. for trenching in).
- Need cul-de-sacs big enough for busses to get around. Some that the busses can't go down.
- Ensure consistency in application of rules/regulations
- Make sure there is enough off-street parking associated with multi-family housing
- Synder provides good guidance on what is working and not working
- Current leadership is willing to accept change when necessary

Anything else you'd like to share?

- We have to grow. Staying stagnant is reverse, but growth puts demands on services.
- We should annex up to 142nd street to the north (at least) so that we are not land locked
- We should concentrate on the land to the east that is already within the City limits AND the land to the north
- Keep alert to land use around Hugg Drive.
- Make sure that what the Comprehensive Plan states is reality today.
- Need property in future land use plan to accommodate more facilities (public services)

- Need more commercial areas
- Look at traffic safety
 - o 3rd & Broadway
 - o 3rd & West Bridge Road
 - o Parker and West Bridge Road
 - o Turn lane on 415 – with E Southside Drive and W Pine Ridge Dr.
- Importance of maintaining infrastructure
- Will need to plan for more water storage
- Concern about sewer bills expected to triple in cost (according to IDNR)
- Library provides a lot of programming, both within the building and out in the community
- Library provides many services (cake pans, stamps, crafts, coffees, etc.)
- Need safe crosswalks (not safe crossing in front of school; no sidewalk on opposite side of school to get to school)
- Between 40-45 new houses a year keeps the upward trend and allows the city to keep up with services. 80-100 houses a year will be difficult to keep up with