APPENDICES

Appendix A. ACCOMPLISHED: Goals from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

- ✓ A neighborhood park to serve the southeast part of the residential area in Decorah and a neighborhood park to serve the Freeport area should be developed during the planning period.

- ✓ Replacement or renovation of the East Side Elementary School should be considered during the planning period.

- ✓ Standards for erosion control and erosion control plans are encouraged in the review process of subdivision plats and site plans.

- ✓ The Freeport water system should be interconnected with the Decorah water system to improve flows and water quality of the two systems.

Appendix B. Points of Interest for Future Land Use Suggestions or Changes

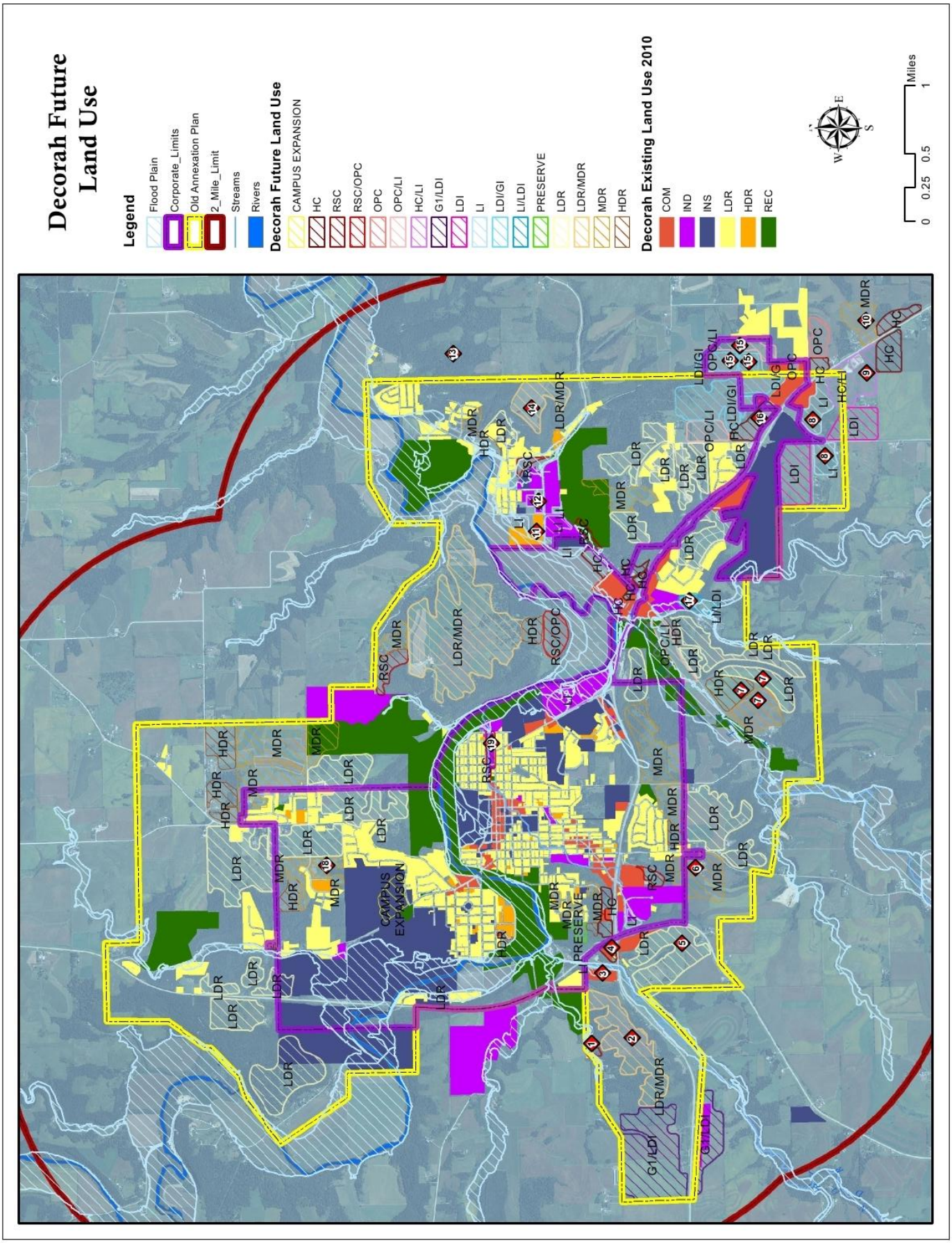
Locate the correlating number on the Future Land Use map (Page 127), with notes and explanation on the page below.

* Changed = was classified in 1992 plan and is being recommended for change
+Added = New area that was not part of the 1992 future land use map
1. + McCaffrey's restaurant recently built and now reflects Retail Service Commercial.
2. * Prior intended use was Industrial, with single family homes built to reflect change to Residential.
3. * J.B. Holland Construction and surrounding area modified from Industrial to Light Industrial.
4. * N.W. corner of Hwy 9/52 intersection – Hovden property from Commercial to Hwy/Commercial.
5. + S.W. corner of 9/52 intersection – potential for Low Density Residential expansion.
6. + South of old Wal-Mart - changed from High Density Commercial to Medium Density Residential.
7. + Originally General Industrial designated, and added Low, Medium, and High Density Residential consideration to this area taking into account the proximity to the scenic resources of the river, trail, rolling bluffs and near parks and fish hatchery.
8. * Changed from Limited Industrial to Light Industrial to match and follow current logical growth trend.
9. * Near Brynsaas new building off Hwy 9 (by Lifetime Gutter/Auction building), changed from Light Industrial to Highway Commercial to reflect current development trend and compatibility.
10. + Added as Medium Density Residential near the existing Hickory Hills development.
11. * Reduction in Freeport Area- Respecting Flood Plain due to frequency and magnitude of flood events in past 15 years, recognizing and respecting Mother Nature.
12. * Changed from Retail Service Commercial to Light Industrial by Kerndt Building and Storage in Freeport.
13. * Changed from Ag to Medium Density Residential by "Old Salvage Yard" past Freeport.
14. + Howdy Hills - Extension "Up Top" through current development to top of hill for LDR/MDR.
15. + Business Park Additions include Light Industrial, General Industrial and Office Park.
16. * Was in the past planned for High Density Residential, but more realistically reconsidered for Highway Commercial in recent planning discussions.
17. + Current growth along this road over the bridge by Olson Explosives and next to Decorah Electric includes Light Industrial to Limited Industrial.
18. + More consideration for development around Vennehjem which could accommodate High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential or Low Density Residential (single family units).
19. * This area on Montgomery/Water street currently industrial, and could be Retail Service Commercial with the right developer.

COMMERCIAL
RSC – Retail Service Commercial
HC- Highway Commercial
OPC – Office Park Commercial

INDUSTRIAL
LI- Light Industrial
LDI- Limited Industrial
GI- General Industrial

RESIDENTIAL
LDR- R 1 Low Density Residential
MDR- R 2 Medium Density Residential
HDR- R 3 High Density Residential


Decorah Future Land Use
Legend
Flood Plain
Corporate_Limits
Old Annexation Plan
2_Mile_Limit
Streams
Rivers
Decorah Future Land Use
CAMPUS EXPANSION
HC
RSC
RSC/OPC
OPC
OPC/LI
HC/LI
G1/LDI
LDI
LI
LDI/GI
LI/LDI
PRESERVE
LDR
LDR/MDR
MDR
HDR
Decorah Existing Land Use 2010
COM
IND
INS
LDR
HDR
REC
N
E
S
W
0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles

Appendix C. Public Input Meeting Comments and Photos

- I'm concerned about high density housing out of town (County). I think housing needs to be constructed in town so that there is easy access to grocery stores, especially. We need to zone farm land for continuing ag use.

- Three things-

1. The low –density residential lots are so large + numerous. The world is changing quickly; awareness about climate change + a quickly changing economy would indicate that we encourage smaller houses, which would sit on smaller lots. A side benefit of this action is that we preserve more far land + recreational land.
2. As we continue this planning, let's make sure to provide pedestrian access from all new neighborhoods to downtown.
3. Is it wise to place high-density residential so far out; I've seen it in Postville, and it ends up looking like they're stuffing the poor away and out of sight.

- The area south of Mound Street homes is zoned moderate to high density and we feel it should be low density residential.
- Maps get copies on line
- When does a home business (B&B) become a commercial business in a residential area? When the owner/resident/ B&B operator moves out and hires help to come to check customers in and make their breakfast? When they move out to make more bedrooms available for more income, more bedroom than there is off-street parking for a "business" like this? When an owner/B&B operators buys another and another house to run multiple B&B house businesses?

Public Hearing Comments

Comments on proposed Decorah Comprehensive Plan in regard to
Future Land Use of Riverwalk Subdivision (low area on West Side near levee):

Many residents of Mound Street and the Riverwalk Subdivision are concerned that the proposed Decorah Comprehensive Plan would facilitate efforts to shoe-horn a high density residential development into their neighborhood. HDR development within that area would be inharmonious with the neighborhood, would unduly increase traffic on a lengthy cul-de-sac, would unnecessarily place additional people and property at risk in the event of a severe flood event, and would breach promises to neighbors concerning the extent of development.

A map labeled "Figure 16 Future Land Use" appears at page 112 of the Draft Plan. A similar map also appears at page 135 of the Draft Plan, and is labeled "Appendix B. Future Land Use Changes." Both of these maps show the Riverwalk Subdivision area with a future land use designation of "HDR" or "High Density Residential." The HDR designation of Riverwalk Subdivison should be deleted or amended to MDR for the reasons explained below:

High Density Residential is defined at page111 of the draft plan as "High density developments of more than 4 dwelling units per structure." Medium Density Residential is defined as "Medium density developments of buildings with 2-4 units per structure."

Northern Iowa Development Corporation (NIDC) previously obtained site plan approval for development of 46 condominium units, all of which were to be placed in buildings with 2-4 units per structure. The 2000 site plan approval and TIF approval followed intensive negotiations between NIDC, the City, and neighboring residents, which resulted in promises to constrain the nature and scope of development in this area. The improvements which Riverwalk illustrated in its 2000 site plan and promised to implement in consideration of the TIF funding it received would therefore result in <u>medium</u> density residential development as defined in the Draft Plan. The "Future Land Use" map, as drafted, endorses a breach of past promises made to Mound Street neighbors and Riverwalk condo purchasers.

Current members of the Council are familiar with the repeated controversies involving the development of the Riverwalk area over the past 12 years -- some council members have had a longer breadth of experience than others. As Council members retire in future years, the Council will lose its collective memories of past promises and agreements. It is important that this City Council leave in place a "Future Land Use" map which <u>accurately</u> portrays the long term planning promised and found appropriate for Riverwalk – a map which would not encourage NIDC's successors to seek high density development which would breach past agreements.

The history of this area, as it relates to an appropriate future land use designation for Riverwalk is briefly summarized below:

In 1999, NIDC presented a proposal for development of the area in question, promising no outdoor parking lots, a trail system proposed to connect to local and city trails, a property tax yield of $1,152,000, and enlarged open space areas.

On February 15, 2000, the site plan was approved by the City Council subject to conditions including conditions which the Planning and Zoning had earlier recommended. The City Council's conditions included provision for rain run-off from a 100-year event, and provision for a maintenance bond for replacement of shrubbery.

NIDC then moved into negotiations for TIF financing. (Council minutes from April 18, 2000 to December 4, 2000.) During that period, the City Council encouraged the developer to include neighboring property owners in meetings and discussions which ultimately lead to an agreement to amend the site plan so as to make the project more aesthetically pleasing to the neighbors.

The agreement reached as a result of the Neighborhood meetings included the elimination of Dwelling #12 and the scaling back of Dwelling #13 on the site plan. The resulting site plan involved 2-story buildings no larger than 4-plexes, separated by ample green space.

In consideration of the promise to develop this area in the scaled-back manner promised pursuant to the amended site plan, the City agreed to provide a $416,132 TIF rebate of taxes to help finance the project. The Development Agreement was signed by the City and NIDC on January 5, 2001, states that the Developer will install certain improvements, and states that "This Agreement shall inure to the benefit of and be binding upon the successors and assigns of the parties."

When the TIF pursuant to the amended site plan was approved on December 4, 2000, the final plat for the area was also approved by the city council. Attached to the final plat were covenants and restrictions in which the owners made promises, including the following:

> "1. The owners of the property shall be required to maintain and replace, any and all trees and shrubbery initially placed on the property by the developer. (The site plan contained detailed provisions for placement of trees and shrubbery throughout Riverwalk.)
> 2. The above lots are to be used only for the development of multi-family residences…
> 5. A perpetual easement is reserved for utility installation and maintenance, drainage and bicycle and walking trails as shown on the attached plat."

After the site plan was amended to accommodate the concerns of the Mound Street neighbors, and after the TIF was approved, NIDC unsuccessfully attempted to amend the site plan in August and November of 2001 to allow a triplex to be constructed where a duplex is shown on the site plan. At that time Councilperson Wanless stated the development agreement was approved because neighbors had agreed on the current site plan. The Council unanimously denied the request.

In July of 2005, NIDC again requested an amendment to the site plan, to enable construction of additional units. The minutes state: "Councilperson Wanless stated that this issue revolves around the fact that City participation was approved based on the agreement reached at that time and is concerned about this request for additional units." Again all council members voted to deny the changes.

In the summer of 2008, severe flooding came close to topping Decorah's levee, forcing massive evacuations, sometimes over flooded streets. The 2008 flood also illustrated another problem: When the river is in flood and the flood gates are closed, all stormwater falling on the West Side flows down to the interior of the levee, where it is trapped and floods property near the levee until the backwater can be pumped over the levee. In 2008, the storage capacity of stormwater detention areas interior to the West Side levee was proven deficient, as was Decorah's ability to promptly pump storm drainage over the levee.

On February 7, 2011, a new owner of the undeveloped portion of Riverwalk asked the City Council to vacate easements and to approve a new site plan calling for development of a large assisted living facility on Riverwalk rather than completing the condominium site plan approved in 2000. The City Council once again unanimously denied the request. More recently, another developer has proposed the development of a large apartment complex in this area.

In summary, if this Council were to adopt the Draft Plan without first correcting Riverwalk's "Future Land Use" designation, it would leave a terrible legacy for future city planners deciding Riverwalk development requests over the next 20 years. The draft Plan, if not amended, would place all future City Councils in a dilemma each time HDR development is requested in Riverwalk -- either disregard Decorah's 2011 "Future Land Use" map endorsing HDR development, or disregard the City's past promises negotiated with neighbors.

I would therefore encourage the City Council to amend the Comprehensive Plan to delete the HDR designation of the Riverwalk Subdivision as shown on the maps at pages 112 and 135, and to substitute a designation of MDR.

Comments on proposed Decorah Comprehensive Plan:

Page 12 of the Draft plan approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission contains a table labeled: **"Table 4. Population Projection A: Based on a goal of 15,000 people by 2020."** Table 4 projects the Decorah population swelling to 15,112 by 2020, a near doubling in 9 years. (The same page projects that if Decorah continues to grow at its normal rate of growth, its population will grow from 8,159 to 8,457 during that time.)

For reasons explained below, 6.4% population growth should not be a city "goal." The City Council should clarify that point before adopting the Comprehensive Plan. The Draft plan contains the following explanation of table 4:

> "Table 4 above is calculated starting with Decorah's future land use needs estimate of 15,000 people by the year 2020. Using a constant annual growth rate, Decorah would need to average 6.4% population growth per year over the next 10 years to reach that estimate. However, the actual growth rate has been 0.4% for the past three decades. Table 5, to the left, shows the population estimates for Decorah using a 0.4% growth rate."

If these projections are extended for 40 years, we can visualize whether the 6.4% growth rate "goal" for Decorah is smart and sustainable, or whether a continuation of the present 0.4% rate might be a better way to preserve our city's high quality of life. Here is such a projection:

	0.4% growth (Table 5)	**6.4% growth (Table 4)**		**0.4% growth (Table 5)**	**6.4% growth (Table 4)**
2011	8,159	8,647	2031	8,837	29,902
2012	8,192	9,200	2032	8,872	31,816
2013	8,224	9,789	2033	8,908	33,852
2014	8,257	10,416	2034	8,944	36,018
2015	8,290	11,082	2035	8,979	38,323
2016	8,323	11,792	2036	9,015	40,776
2017	8,357	12,546	2037	9,051	43,386
2018	8,390	13,349	2038	9,088	46,163
2019	8,424	14,204	2039	9,124	49,117
2020	8,457	15,113	2040	9,160	52,260
2021	8,491	16,080	2041	9,197	55,605
2022	8,525	17,109	2042	9,234	59,164
2023	8,559	18,204	2043	9,271	62,950
2024	8,594	19,369	2044	9,308	66,979
2025	8,628	20,609	2045	9,345	71,266
2026	8,662	21,928	2046	9,382	75,827
2027	8,697	23,331	2047	9,420	80,680
2028	8,732	24,824	2048	9,458	85,843
2029	8,767	26,413	2049	9,496	91,337
2030	8,802	28,103	**2050**	**9,533**	**97,183**

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines a "goal" as **"the end toward which effort is directed."** A comprehensive plan "goal" of 6.4% growth begs two questions: Would the City of Decorah, and its residents, benefit from government efforts to double our population in 9 years, perhaps through taxpayer subsidies for private development? Or would Decorah residents be better served by maintaining its past policy of relying on the forces of the free market to build the city at normal historical rates, within reasonable zoning restraints aimed at preserving Decorah's environment and high quality of life?

A Comprehensive Plan statement that 6.4% growth is a Decorah "goal" would inevitably be used to promote development which does not make sense or conflicts with other parts of the Plan. Development of high density housing which is not in harmony with a surrounding neighborhood, or development of a sensitive area such as a flood plain are just two examples of unwise development which might be justified by reference to a 6.4% growth "goal."

The City should remember that over-development can cause unintended problems. If the population of Decorah rapidly doubles, how might that affect crime rates, traffic congestion, water quality, and other quality of life issues? Recently, too-rapid development of housing in many cities (e.g. Las Vegas) resulted in a housing bubble which collapsed, causing the value of all housing stock in the city to plummet. As a result, many families found themselves underwater on their mortgages, unable to sell their property, and facing foreclosure.

If government efforts to promote rapid population growth in Decorah would not improve the quality of life of its residents, why should we articulate such growth as a <u>goal</u> in our Comprehensive Plan? Instead, we should encourage a continuation of the gradual growth which has enabled us to meet our needs without sacrificing our environment and high quality of life.

At the October 10, 2011 hearing, members of the P & Z explained that Table 4 was not really a <u>"goal"</u> but was rather a <u>projection based on the highest rate of growth which could realistically be expected</u> in the City of Decorah, especially after accounting for the impact of extensive annexation of areas surrounding Decorah which are already experiencing substantial development. The P & Z further explained the City should plan for the possibility of high rates of growth when installing new infrastructure improvements such as sewer and water. By planning for possible future population growth, the city can make sure that it will not need to go back and reinstall larger diameter sewer and water pipes to accommodate future needs. The P & Z commission also pointed out that future annexation of nearby areas into the city of Decorah, including outlying areas already served by Decorah sewer and water, would result in an automatic population increase even without the rapid new growth and development implied by Table 4. Although the P & Z explanation makes sense, if that is only purpose of Table 4, it should be labeled as a <u>projection</u> rather than as a <u>goal</u> and better explained.

In summary, I would encourage the City Council to amend the Comprehensive Plan to state: "Table 4. Population Projection A: Based on 15,000 people by 2020."

I also encourage the Council to add the following explanation: "Table 4 is not a goal, but is rather a projection showing high rates of growth which could result from both annexation and development."

My wife and I have been before the P and Z for about 11 years now concerning the land south of Mound Street, which includes the Riverwalk Condominiums.

We recommend that the zoning be changed from R-3 to R-2. We feel that R-3 allows building that is not in harmony with the neighborhood. According to the City Code, that is an issue to be considered.

Even though the area is not in a designated flood plain, it is a natural drainage area. High density construction would prevent that drainage. Do you really know what impact that will have on the entire area and east to the basketball court?

The area is located next to the dike. Again, high density construction may have some negative impact. We feel that's a big risk.

There is one ingress and egress. High density building could pose a safety issue with traffic and emergency vehicles.

In summary, we feel now is the time to change the zoning in this area from R-3 to R-2

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