

City of Center Point and Linn County Fringe Area Plan and Agreement

{Date}

DRAFT

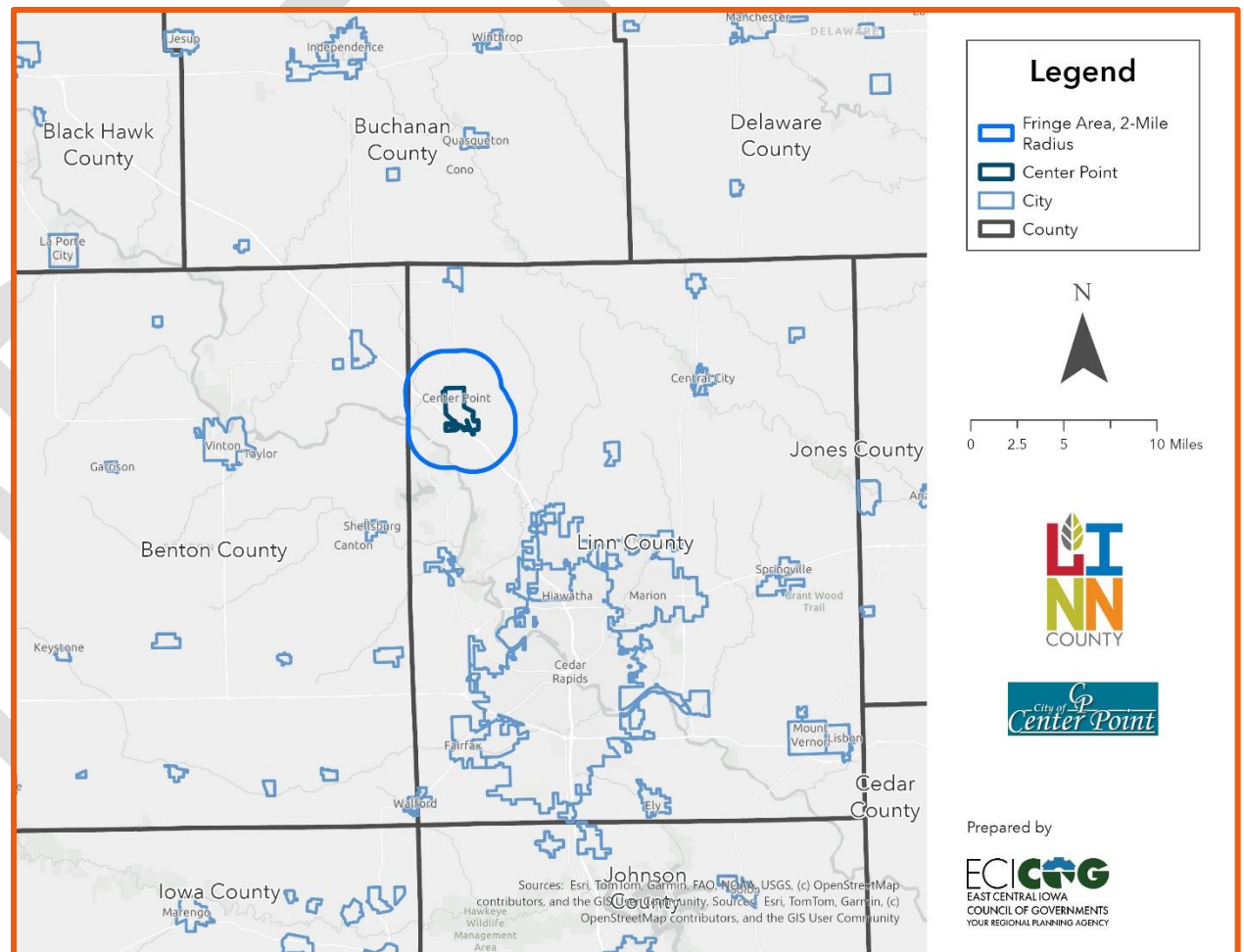


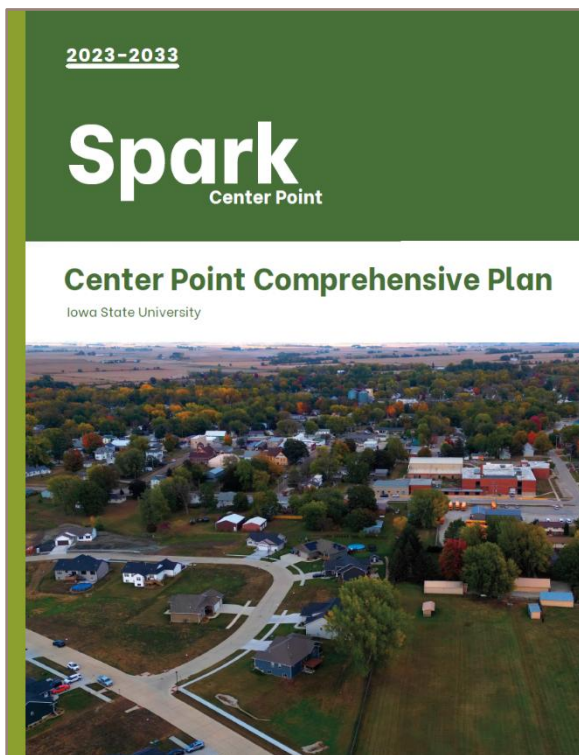
City of Center Point and Linn County Fringe Area Plan

Fringe Area Plans and Agreements

Fringe area plans and agreements coordinate the development that takes place in unincorporated areas near a city. Chapter 354 of the Code of Iowa allows cities the ability to review and approve subdivision applications within two miles of their boundary or enter into a 28E agreement with the county or counties that area encompasses to define the development review process. Center Point's fringe area is shown in Map 1.

Map 1 Center Point and Fringe Area within Region





This is the first fringe area plan and agreement for the City of Center Point and Linn County. The City of Center Point adopted an updated comprehensive plan in 2023. The update of a comprehensive plan and land use map present a good opportunity to consider the potential expansion of the City's boundaries and mutually beneficial coordination with the County. Recent trends in population growth in the region also demonstrate the pragmatism of having a plan and agreement in place.

Planning Process

Linn County partnered with the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) to facilitate the development of the plan and agreement. ECICOG reviewed existing plans, land use regulations, development constraints, and easements and used that information as the basis for a draft of an agreement. The City of Center Point held an open house on June 16, 2025, to share the context for the development of the agreement. A public input activity was also developed to seek feedback from Linn County and Center Point residents regarding perspectives on sprawl and the proposed agreement. The open house was advertised by both the City and the County, and an online version of the input activity was created on a project webpage. Residents who were unable to attend were able to review

the open house posters on the project webpage and provide their input online or with a paper copy of the survey.

Resident input was reviewed prior to finalizing the plan and agreement. A final draft of the plan and agreement was released on September 30, 2025. Both the City and County advertised the availability of the plan, and participants of the open house and public input survey who provided an email address were notified of the plan availability by email. The Center Point and Linn County planning and zoning commissions reviewed the plan and agreement on October 20, 2025, and November 17, 2025, respectively, and recommended approval. The Center Point City Council and Linn County Board of Supervisors held public hearings for the plan and agreement on _____ and _____, respectively and adopted the plan and agreement by resolution. A 28E agreement between the City and County was executed and recorded with the Secretary of State.

Linn County Land Use Policies and Regulations

The Linn County comprehensive was adopted in 2013. The plan does not have any specific development plans within the fringe area of Center Point. It has several generally applicable goals and objectives that informed the update to the fringe area agreement. The plan also specifically supports fringe area planning and agreements to support the orderly development of cities within Linn County.

**Figure 1 Linn County Comprehensive Plan
Relevant Goals and Objectives**

Economic

Goal 2

Encourage the long-term viability of agriculture.

Objective 2.5

Determine those areas best suited for locating business.

Strategy: Direct most commercial and industrial development to the cities with adequate facilities and services to support their needs.

Resource Protection

Goal 2

Encourage the long-term viability of agriculture.

Objective 2.3

Discourage non-agricultural uses in the agricultural areas of the county; discourage scattered, leapfrog development.

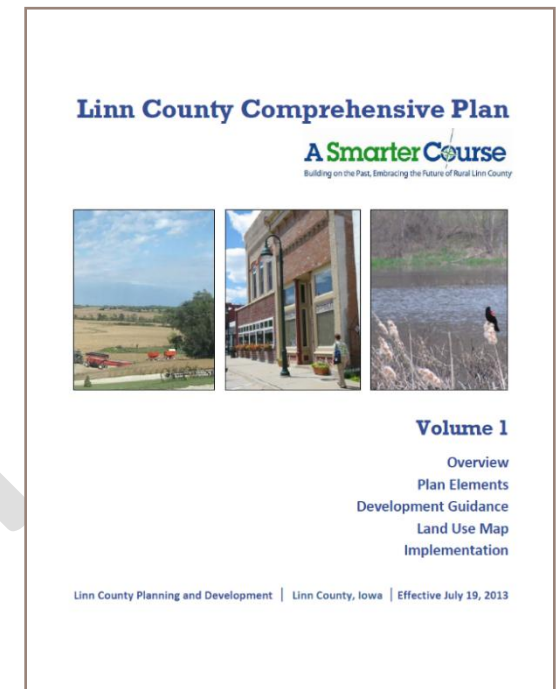
Sustainable Development

Goal 1

Maximize the use of existing gray infrastructure and adopt innovative green infrastructure techniques.

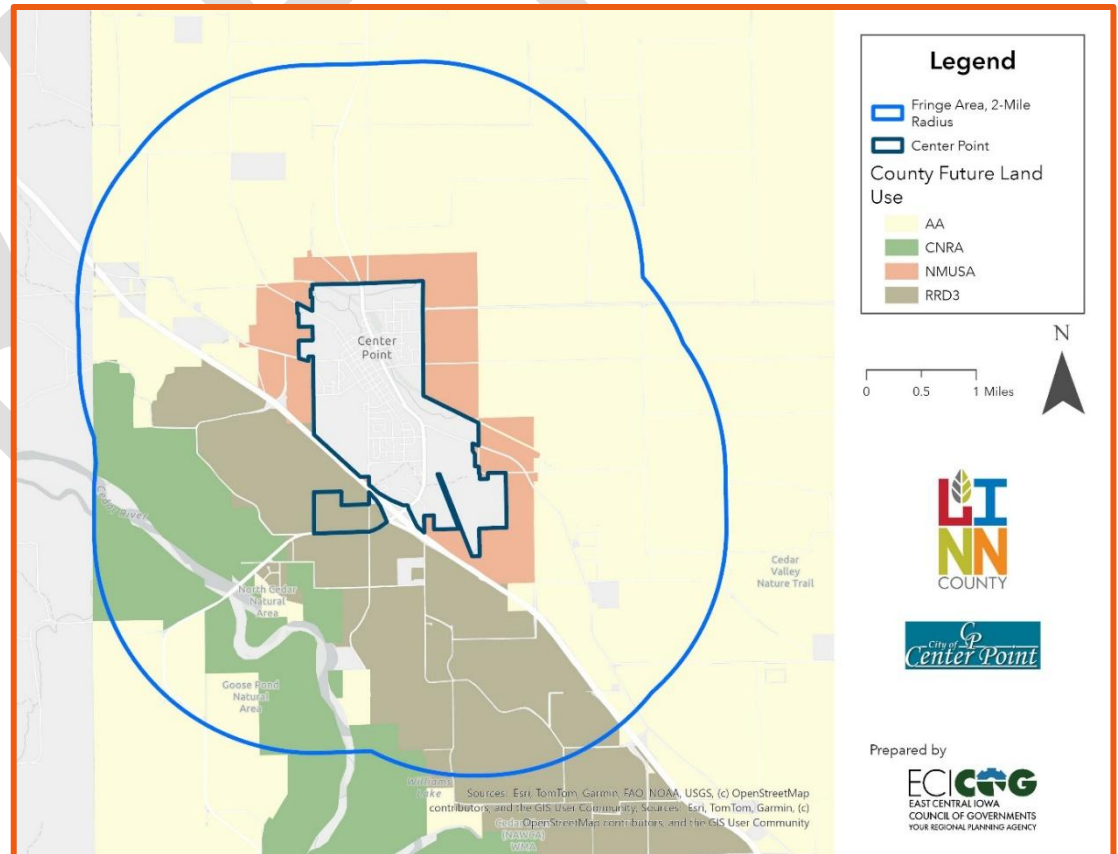
Objective 1.2

Coordinate standards and review processes with municipalities. County and city plans (and ordinances when practical) should be consistent and cohesive.



The Linn County Future Land Use Map, Map 2, as of 2025 shows four land uses within the City's fringe area: 1) Agricultural Area (AA), 2) Non-Metro Urban Service Area (NMUSA), 3) Rural Residential 3-Acre Area (RRD3), and 4) Critical Natural Resources Area (CRNA). The AA covers the fringe area north of I-380 that is not in the NMUSA. The AA is intended to maintain or enhance the viability of agricultural operations. It generally requires a 35-acre minimum lot size, which is not incompatible with future urban development. The NMUSA covers an area that is potentially developable by the adjacent city within 10 years and is intended to be held as an agricultural use until it is developed by the city. The RRD3 is present south of I-380 and north of the CRNA that surrounds the Cedar River. It is intended for large-lot, low-density residential development. The City's current future land use map has little additional area indicated for expansion of the City south of I-380. The CRNA, surrounding the river, is intended to conserve and protect "high-value" natural resource areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas. At the time of this planning effort, the County was working on an update to the FLUM, with a goal of adopted revisions by the end of 2025. More information can be found at www.linncountyiowa.gov/299/Comprehensive-Plan.

Map 2 Linn County
Current Future Land Use Map



City of Center Point Land Use Policies and Regulations

The City of Center Point's 2023 comprehensive plan shows that growth is likely for Center Point and could increase over the next decade given the proximity to the rapid development of the fringe area of the Cedar Rapids metro. The City's future land use map was updated, designating proposed future uses for land currently in the fringe area.

The plan revolves around three main strategies, Figure 3:

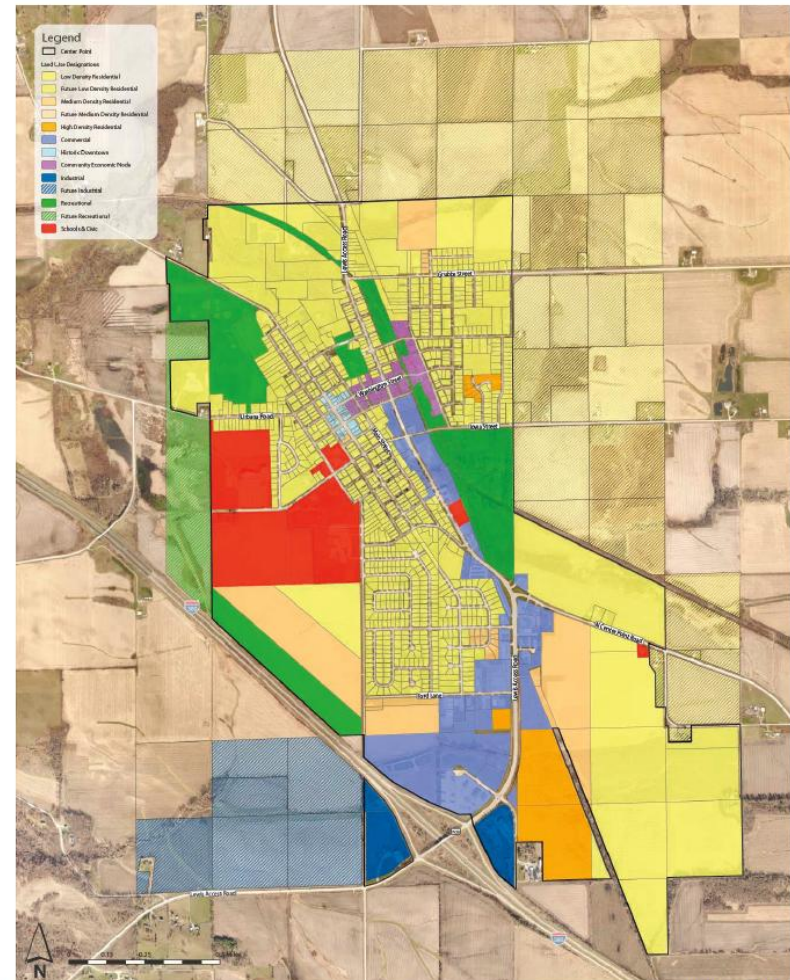
1. **Create a community economic node**
2. **Promote low- and medium-density development**
3. **Support future industrial sector**

The community economic node is proposed within the current city limits. Development of low- and medium-density housing and an industrial sector, south of Interstate 380, are envisioned to occur within the current fringe area. These possible expansions are depicted in the future land use map, Map 3.

Map 3 Center Point Future Land Use Map

PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE

Center Point Proposed Future Land-Use Map



52

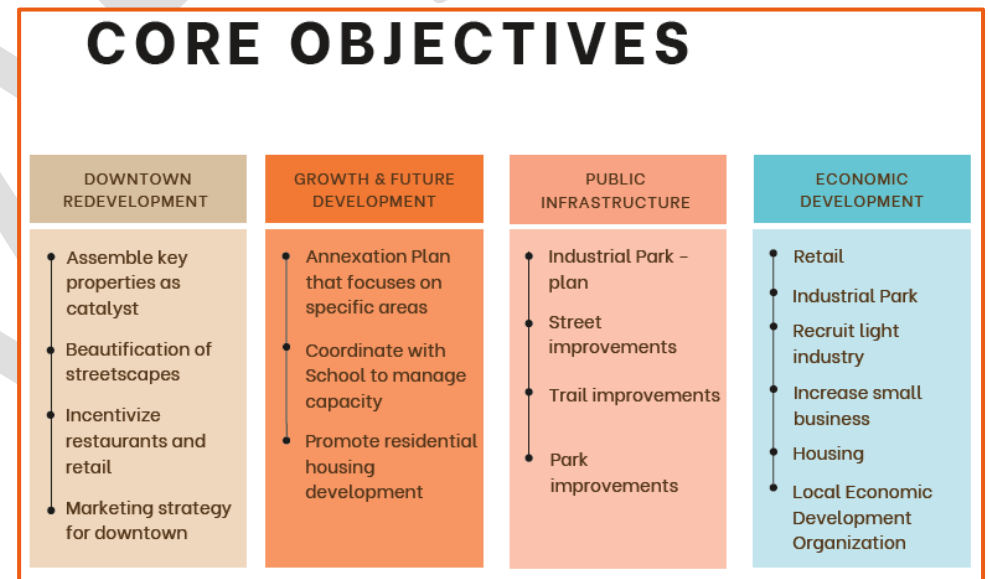
Figure 3.1

**Figure 3 Center Point Comprehensive Plan
Main Strategies**



Within the core objectives of the plan, Figure 2, the most support for fringe area planning is within the “Growth & Future Development”, “Public Infrastructure”, and “Economic Development” objectives. The elements of the main strategies and core objectives that are most relevant to the fringe are plan are highlighted in Figure 3 and Figure 2.





**Figure 2 Center Point Comprehensive Plan
Core Objectives**






The extent of the current City utility lines—water and sanitary sewer—and development constraints—floodplain and interstate—make the expansion into the fringe area most likely for the northern portion of the city for residential development and south of I-380 for industrial development. Map 4 shows Center Point, the extent of the City’s future land use map, the fringe area, and the nearby floodplain. The fringe area to the northwest of the City will be more difficult to serve with utilities because of the floodplain and terrain,

City of Center Point and Linn County Fringe Area Plan and Agreement

Legend



-  Fringe Area, 2-Mile Radius
-  Center Point FLUM Extent
-  Developed Area
-  Center Point

Flood Zone


-  0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
-  A - 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
-  AE - 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, Base Flood Elevation Determined

0 0.5 1 Miles

N

Prepared by



EAST CENTRAL IOWA
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
YOUR REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY



Regional Development

Both Center Point and Linn County grew from 2010 to 2020, Figure 4. Center Point had a population of 2,579 in 2020, up 6.5% from 2,421 in 2010. The rate slowed significantly from the 20.6% growth experienced the previous decade. Linn County had a population of 230,299 in 2020, up 9.0% from 211,226 in 2010. That growth was similar to the 10.2% experienced by the county in the previous decade. The growth experienced in the County was from the growth of population in the county's cities, not the unincorporated parts of the county, which saw a decline of population of 6.6%. The growth rates for Center Point and Linn County from 2010 to 2020 exceeded Iowa's growth rate, 4.7%, and suggest there will be development pressure in Center Point in the future.

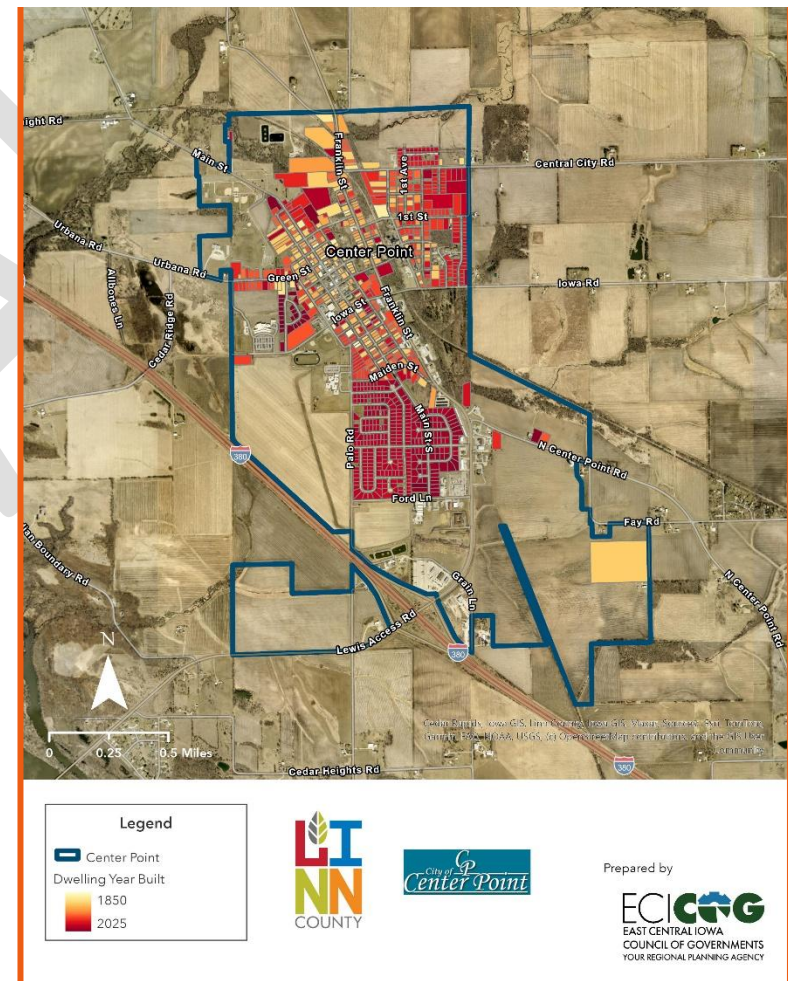
Center Point Historical Development

Center Point has always been a growing community, with the exception of 1910–1920. In every other decade since 1870, the city has experienced growth, even in the 1980s when many communities across Iowa experienced a decline in population. Data from the Linn County assessor for the construction year of the principal dwelling, Map 5, shows the approximate physical development of the community, which has been largely contiguous with existing development, i.e. lighter colors (older development) tend to appear closer to lighter colors and darker colors (newer development) tend to appear closer to darker colors.

Figure 4 Center Point, Linn County, and State of Iowa Growth

Geography	2010	2020	Percent Change
Center Point	2,421	2,579	6.5%
Linn County	211,226	230,299	10.2%
Iowa	3,046,355	3,190,369	4.7%

Map 5 Center Point Historical Development



Public Input



The City of Center Point hosted an open house for the proposed fringe area plan and agreement on June 16, 2025. The event was advertised by the City and County. The meeting was set up in an open house format, with information for participants to review at their convenience. Large posters were displayed that described 1) fringe areas and the need for fringe area planning and agreements, 2) the relevant City and County plans and land use policies, 3) an outline of the draft development process for proposed developments within the fringe area, and 4) information related to leapfrog development to be used for the public input form. Approximately 50 community members attended the meeting. The meeting materials and survey were made available online at talkto.ecicog.org/linn-county-center-point-fringe-area-agreement.

Meeting Summary

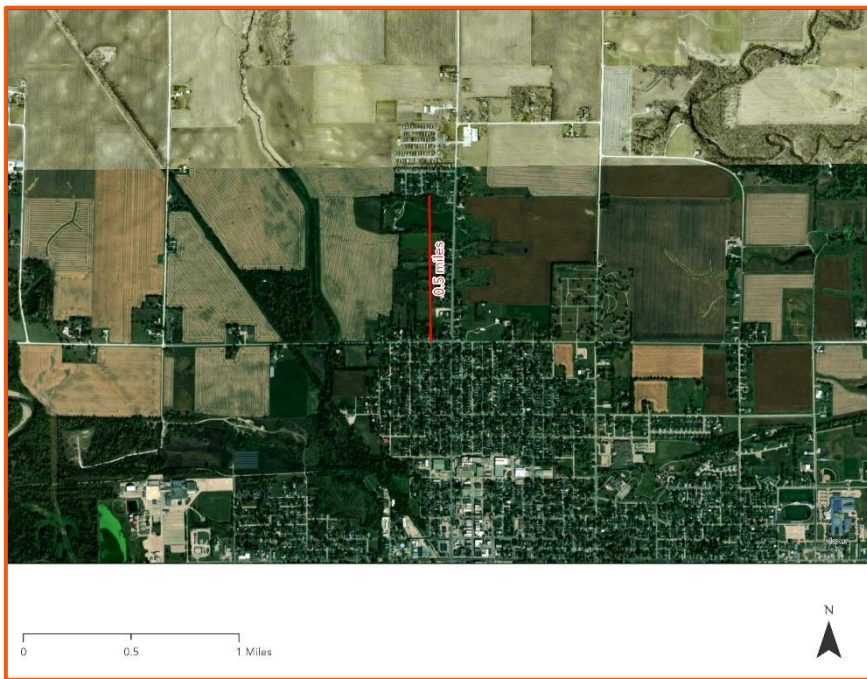
The open house-style meeting would have been better suited to a smaller attendance, which was expected. During the meeting, several similar questions from different individuals were posed to the meeting facilitators—Joe Taylor, City of Center Point City Administrator, and Tom Gruis, ECICOG Senior Planner—concerning the City’s plans for expansion and annexation. The City Administrator began a discussion with the meeting participants to provide clarifying information.

Questions were raised about the City’s plans for expansion, how the fringe area plan would help the City to expand, how different types of developments would be permitted under the plan, and how it would affect taxes. The meeting facilitators explained that a fringe area plan is not a plan for expansion. Rather, it helps to coordinate the concurrent development reviews that occur in the City and County when proposals are made within the fringe area. Examples were provided for how the fringe area agreement would influence certain development types, e.g. large-lot rural development or denser urban type development. The City Administrator stated that the City does not have an annexation plan, and it would not be part of the fringe area agreement. Annexations are very likely to be voluntary. It was stated that taxes are not affected by the fringe area agreement. Annexation would change the taxing authorities of an area, but it was reiterated those would be voluntary and driven largely by private landowners.

Input Summary

A short survey form was prepared to gather community members' perspectives on expansion of Center Point into the fringe area. The survey also asked about the home and business (for business owners) locations of the participants. Map 7 is an example of the maps shared in the open house posters depicting leapfrog, non-contiguous, development at different distances. The examples are from other communities in Iowa. An example of a development spur, Map 6, a narrow band of development along a single corridor, was also shared. Questions were posed regarding the effects of leapfrog development or development spurs on the community's small-town character.

Map 7 Example of Disconnected Development



Map 6 Example of Development Spur



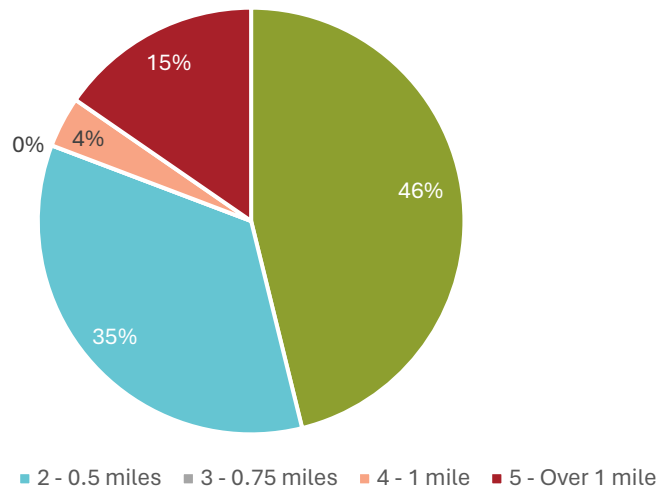
The survey received 27 responses. 11 were received at the public meeting and 16 were completed on the project web page. Using the provided maps as reference, participants were asked "When new development occurs, at what distance do you think it would feel like urban sprawl and affect Center Point's small-town character?" A few respondents felt that those effects would occur with

development separated by a mile or more of undeveloped land, but the vast majority of respondents, 81% felt that growth would feel like sprawl and affect the City's small-town character when it occurred over ¼ or ½ mile from existing development, Chart 2.

Participants were also asked whether a development spur would be consistent with Center Point's small-town character. More than a majority, 62%, felt that a development spur would not be consistent with Center Point's small-town character, Chart 1. The responses from participants suggest strong support for compact, contiguous development over sprawling, disconnected development. Chart 3 shows the backgrounds of participants of the survey. There was a variety of perspectives included: participants were among residents and business owners from within Center Point, the fringe area, and in the county outside of the fringe area, Chart 3.

Chart 2 Public Input Question 1, Disconnected Development

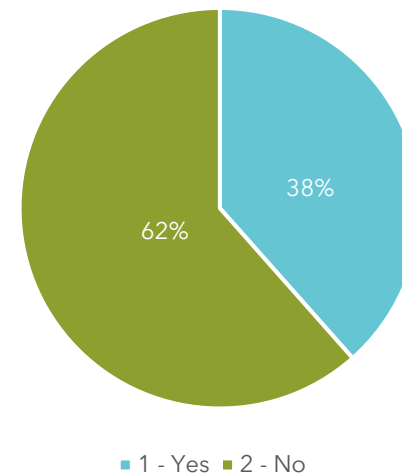
Q1 - When new development occurs, at what distance do you think it would feel like urban sprawl and affect Center Point's small-town character?



n = 26

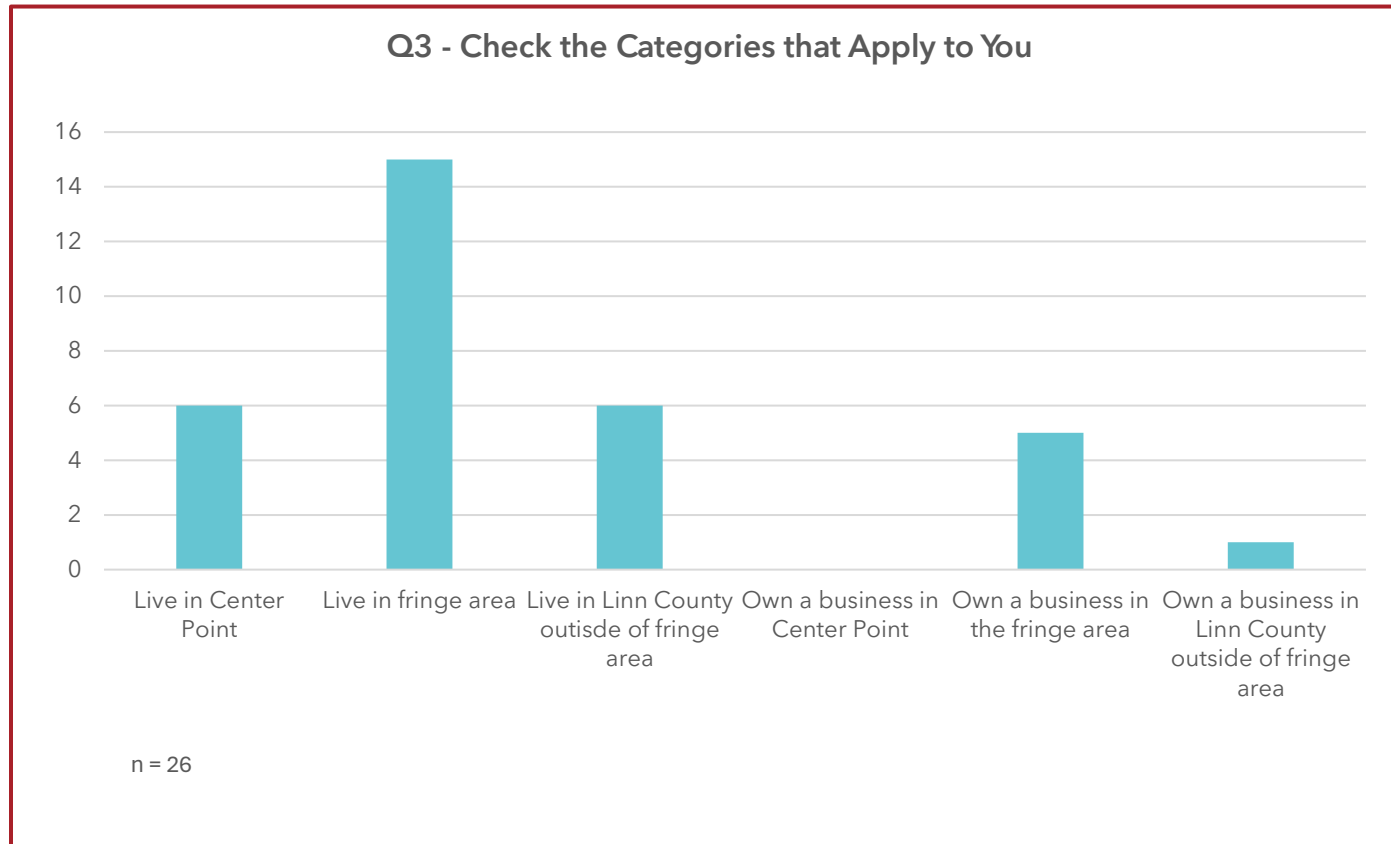
Chart 1 Public Input Question 2, Development Spur

Q2 - The Public Input poster shows an example of a development spur that extends in a narrow band along a corridor. Do you think that type of development would be consistent with Center Point's small-town character?



n = 26

Chart 3 Public Input Question 3, Respondent Background



Participants were also able to leave comments about the proposed fringe area agreement. There were recurring themes about prioritizing development within the community first (i.e. infill development, including Center Point's downtown), preserving agricultural land, and prioritizing development toward I-380 (with some comments asking the City to support an aesthetically pleasing entrance to the community around I-380). The comments provided through the form can be found in the appendix.

Fringe Area Agreement

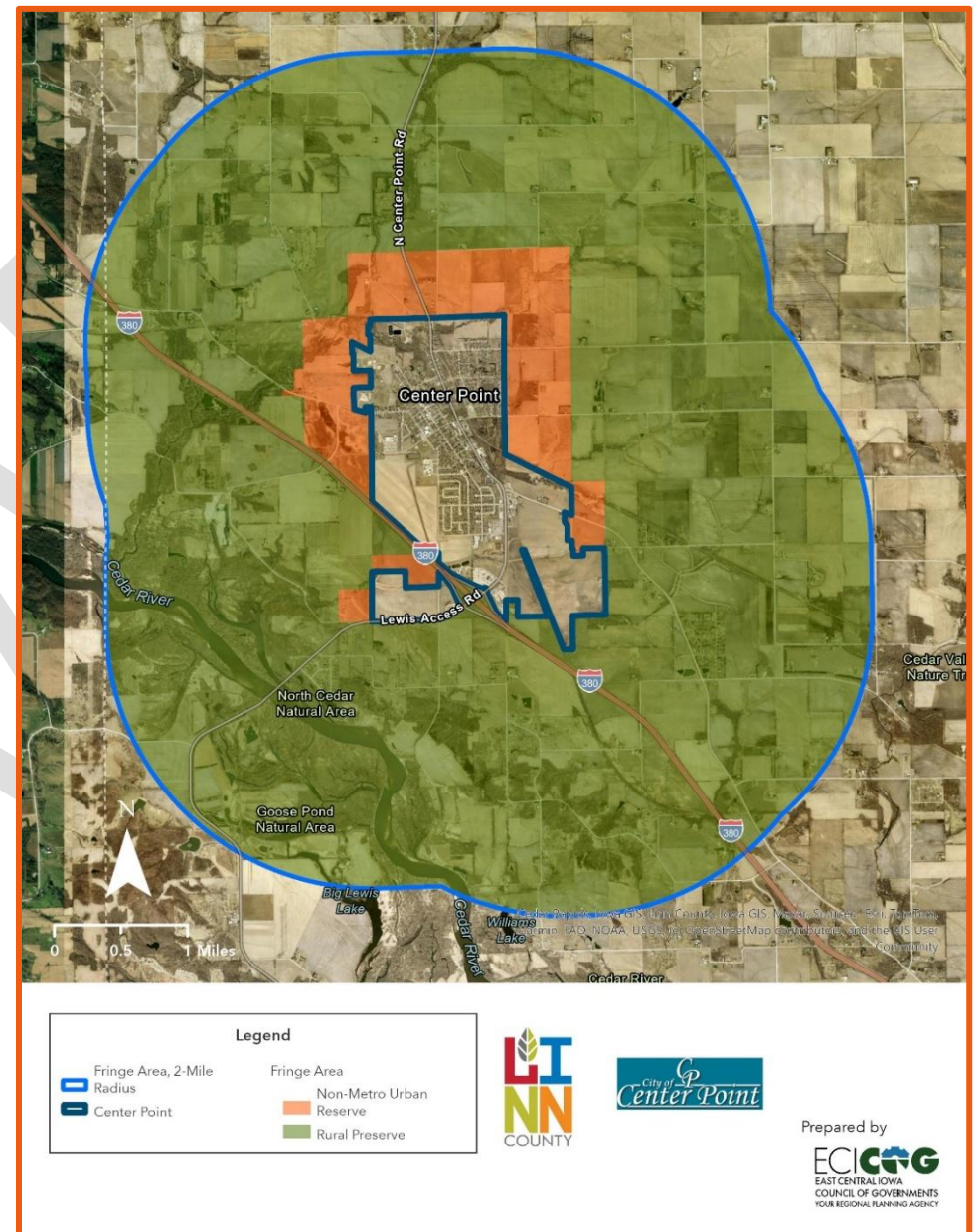
Linn County and Center Point's agreement establishes two areas that emphasize different levels of review by each entity. The areas identified within Center Point's fringe area are the Non-Metro Urban Reserve and the Rural Preserve, refer to Map 8. The Non-Metro Urban Reserve is the area adjacent to the City that could likely be served by City utilities within the next 10 years. If commercial, industrial, or housing developments consistent with an urban environment are proposed within the fringe area, they would be most supported by the County in the Urban Reserve or within the city itself. Concurrent annexation into Center Point would be recommended, and the developer would need to have a discussion with the City about annexation as part of the development review process.

Development proposals outside of the Urban Reserve would largely follow County's land use policies. Under the current future land use map, Map 2, the most supported uses are agricultural. Some area south of I-380 allows for large-lot, rural residential development, and the fringe area also includes a Critical Natural Resource Area adjacent to the Cedar River. The City would maintain approval authority for subdivision proposals within the Rural Preserve.

Alignment with Public Input

An overview of fringe area planning and its purpose, the local context and need for a Linn County and Center Point fringe area plan, and the main points of the draft agreement were presented in the open house materials.

Map 8 Linn County and City of Center Point
Fringe Area Agreement Map



Some of the questions and comments received through the input process suggested an idea that this plan is a plan for Center Point's growth and expansion into the fringe area. Neither the City's nor County's comprehensive plans nor this plan call for government-directed development within Center Point or the fringe area or have specific growth targets. Rather, this plan will help to reinforce the land use policies of the County and City that regulate the, almost exclusively, private development proposals within the fringe area. The fringe area plan will 1) support urban-compatible development proposals within the Urban Reserve and rural-type development within the Rural Preserve, 2) set clearer processes and timelines for development review processes that will involve both jurisdictions, and 3) promote communication and collaboration between jurisdictions. In fact, the County will be starting from an advanced position in regard to the fringe area when it updates its future land use map because of the collaboration of this project.

The size of the Urban Reserve, which is ½ mile at most from the City's current municipal boundary, aligns with the feedback from community members stating at what point they feel disconnected growth would affect the community's small-town feel. The fringe area plan reinforces compact, contiguous development. By supporting new development next to existing urban development, agricultural uses and land may be preserved. A development spur that would extend more than a ½ mile along a corridor, which was not favorable to respondents, would not be supported by the plan.

Infill development is outside of the scope of a fringe area plan. Because landowners have the right to develop their properties, it is prudent for cities to be prepared for development both inside and adjacent to their municipal boundaries. Even with that being the case, it is worth noting that the City's comprehensive plan calls for addressing underutilized assets—the Cedar Valley Nature Trail and historic downtown—to catalyze additional investments in a community economic node (p. 55), i.e. redevelopment is supported.

Agreement Purpose

The policies set forth in this agreement largely align with the preferences and sentiments expressed through the public input form: limiting scattered, leapfrog development; maintaining the City's small-town character and historical development pattern; preserving agricultural land and uses; and respecting the compatibility of neighboring uses for a proposed development. The accompanying agreement provides clarity for landowners and developers for the review and approval process for development. It recognizes the common ground between the visions for the County and City expressed through their comprehensive plans. It will facilitate communication between the two jurisdictions to support the orderly development of the City of Center Point and preserve the areas with rural and/or environmentally sensitive characteristics within the Center Point's fringe area.

Fringe Area Agreement

Between

The City of Center Point, Iowa, and Linn County, Iowa

{DATE}

This agreement is entered into pursuant to Chapter 28E of the *Code of Iowa*, by and between the City of Center Point, Iowa, hereinafter referred to as “City” and Linn County, Iowa, hereinafter referred to as “County” to-wit:

Whereas, Chapter 354, *Code of Iowa*, allows the City to establish a fringe area within two miles of the City for the purpose of reviewing and approving subdivisions, and

Whereas, it is in the interest of the City and the County to establish policies for the orderly growth and development within the two-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City; and

Whereas, the City and County mutually agree that such policies are necessary to effectively and economically provide appropriate services for future growth and development, and

Whereas, the Planning and Zoning Commissions of the City and County recommend approval of said agreement.

Now, Therefore, the parties hereto, do agree for themselves and their respective successors as follows:

SECTION 1. Statement of Intent

The purpose of this agreement is to provide for the orderly and coordinated development of land, as well as to preserve the availability and use of land for agricultural production and the protection of environmentally sensitive land. In addition, this agreement is intended to further the guidelines established in Chapter 18B, Land Use-Smart Planning, of the Code of Iowa.

SECTION 2. Development Policies for the Designated Fringe Areas

As provided in Chapter 28E in the *Code of Iowa*, the City and County agree that each area shall have applied to it the following development policies. The two areas identified are within the two-mile jurisdiction of the City and are shown on the *Linn County & City of Center Point Fringe Area Agreement Map*, attached hereto and made part of this agreement. The policies will affect growth patterns, annexation, zoning and subdivision review, and coordination of land use regulations between the City and County. The two areas are referred to as:

1. Rural Preserve (RP)
2. Non-Metro Urban Reserve (NMUR)

Rural Preserve

Location:	All properties located within the two-mile extraterritorial area of Linn County not designated as the City of Center Point or NMUR.
Policy:	To implement the policies outlined in the County's comprehensive plan and Unified Development Code (Linn County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 107).
Recommended Land Uses	Uses that support the policies of the land use plan designations as shown in the Linn County Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
Justification:	The area is not included in the City's long-range growth plan. Land in this area is best suited for resource protection or limited development conforming to rural design standards.
Rezoning Procedure	The County shall forward all rezoning applications to the City. Review and comment by the City is required before final action by the County.
Subdivision Procedure	Subdivision applications shall be sent to both the City and county. Final action, including the option to waive review, by the City is required before final action by the County.
Minimum Levels of Service	Follow the levels of services established by the Unified Development Code for the appropriate designation as shown on the fringe area agreement map.
Other Design Standards	Follow the County's comprehensive plan and Unified Development Code

Non-Metro Urban Reserve

Location:	All properties designated as the NMUR in the Linn County and City of Center Point Fringe Area Agreement Map.
Policy:	To provide sufficient land for orderly future City development.
Recommended Land Uses	The areas within the NMUR are primarily intended to be annexed into the City of Center Point prior to or concurrent with development or developed at a higher density appropriate for future annexation. Recommended land uses shall be in accordance with the City's Comprehensive Plan at the time of annexation.
Justification:	<p>Development in this area may have significant impacts on City traffic patterns, floodplain management, and property valuations. Therefore, growth in this area should be carefully integrated with existing developments through annexation into the City.</p> <p>The NMUR area represents the likely extent of City-serviceable area for infrastructure, e.g. water and wastewater, in the next 10 years. This area is prioritized for future development to facilitate expanding the built environment contiguous with existing development and allowing for the most cost-effective development of public utility infrastructure.</p>
Development Procedure	<p>Owners of property within the NMUR may apply to the County for the following development processes: Conditional Use Permits; Residential Parcel Splits; Land Preservation Parcel Splits; subdivisions that invoke the bisected lot provision of the Linn County Unified Development Code (UDC), and rezonings associated with any of these development types.</p> <p>The owners for all other development proposals shall discuss application for annexation to the City that is concurrent with subdivision and/or re-zoning applications. City development standards and services are preferred for development within the NMUR.</p>
Design Standards	Those development types listed in "Development Procedure" that are excepted from the requirements for annexation consultation shall meet the goals and objectives of the Linn County and City of Center Point comprehensive plans and applicable County design standards.

Review And Approval Authority

The following table contains the zoning, subdivision, and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) review and approval responsibilities for the City and the County within each designated area. The City may waive their review for any application, as described in the Administrative Policies.

Review and Approval Authority Matrix

	Procedure Type					
	Rezoning		Subdivision		CUP	
Area Designations	City	County	City	County	City	County
RP	Review	Approval	Approval	Approval	N/A	Approval
NMUR	Review ¹	Approval ¹	Approval ²	Approval	Review	Approval

¹ For all developments annexed into the City, Center Point has approval authority and County retains the ability to review and comment on the annexation. Development applications other than the exceptions noted in the Development Procedure require the property owner to discuss annexation with the City. For developments in the NMUR that do not require a discussion of annexation, the City has review authority and the County retains approval authority.

² In accordance with the Code of Iowa, the City retains approval authority of subdivisions not annexed.

SECTION 3. Administrative Policies

Growth management within the area designations of the fringe area map affects both the City and the County. There is a clear need for coordination and joint administration of development policies in this area. To that end, the City and County agree to the following procedures for administration of land use regulations.

1. **Correspondence between authorized representatives of the City and County.**

The City may appoint, from time to time, an authorized representative to coordinate activities with County officials. The City shall provide a written notice of the authorized representative's name, title, address and telephone number, and the extent of their authority to act on behalf of the City for the coordination of land use regulations. The County's authorized representative is the Planning and Development Director or their designee.

These representatives may establish practical guidelines for the transmission of information, coordination of activities and documentation of decisions as they may affect this agreement.

2. **Subdivisions.**

When required by this agreement, subdivision proposals shall be submitted to the City for consideration following a request for annexation. Subdivision proposals that are

excepted from the requirements for annexation shall be submitted to the County, and the applicant will concurrently submit to the City for review and comment in accordance with the Review and Approval Matrix within this agreement. The City Council shall forward a resolution with a recommendation or waiving their right to review the application to the County within sixty (60) days of filing with the County.

3. **Rezoning requests.**

When required by this agreement, zoning proposals shall be submitted to the City for consideration following a request for annexation. Zoning proposals that are excepted from the requirements for annexation shall be submitted to the County and the County will forward to the City for review and comment. The City Council shall forward a resolution with a recommendation or waiving their right to review the application to the County within sixty (60) days of filing with the County.

4. **Conditional use permits.**

Conditional Use Permit applications shall be submitted to the County. Those applications and related information within the NMUR shall be promptly forwarded on to the City for review and action. The City Council shall forward a resolution with a recommendation or waiving their right to review the application to the County within sixty (60) days of the date of filing with the County.

5. **Automatic waiver of review.**

For subdivisions, rezoning requests, and conditional use permits, absence of notification by the City to extend the timeframe stated in subsections 2 through 4 for good cause shall be deemed a waiver of any objection to the application.

6. **Advanced notification of annexation.**

The City will annex territory only in accordance with the Development Policies for the Fringe Area and the Administrative Policies of this agreement. The City will provide written notification to the County of all anticipated annexation requests no less than thirty (30) days before Council approval. The notice will identify the property to be annexed and describe any requested amendment to the agreement resulting from the annexation. The County shall also have the right to comment on the annexation request.

In addition, the City shall provide to the County details of the provision of available or proposed infrastructure serving the area to be annexed, along with a corresponding timeline for such work to be completed.

7. **Exchange of information on land use regulations.**

The City shall provide the County's authorized representative with current copies of the City's zoning and subdivision ordinances, maps, and all other land use regulations. The County shall provide the City's authorized representative with current copies of all County land use standards and regulations, including the plan and all applicable ordinances and codes. Electronic media is acceptable. This provision may also be satisfied through the accessibility of all documents via the City or County web pages.

Notice of updates to land use regulations and policies within Center Point and its fringe area shall be communicated within thirty (30) days of adoption.

8. **Effective periods and updating the provisions of this agreement.**

This agreement shall become effective upon acceptance and execution by both parties and shall be in effect for twenty (20) years after the date of execution of this agreement. This agreement shall be automatically renewed unless the County or the City objects to such renewal prior to the renewal date.

The agreement may be modified and extended by the written consent of both parties. The Non-Metro Urban Service Area may be modified, but only after considering actual and projected growth of the City, planned infrastructure improvements and other factors affecting future growth of the City.

9. **Disputes.**

If the City and County are in conflict over a proposed subdivision, rezoning or other matter which affects this agreement, a review committee appointed by the City Council and Board of Supervisors shall be established to negotiate a resolution. The committee shall be comprised of one member each of the City Council and Board of Supervisors, one member each of the City and County Planning and Zoning Commissions, and one staff member of each respective local government. Within thirty (30) days of the committee's appointment, a proposed solution will be recommended to the City Council and Board of Supervisors for approval. If no resolution is achieved, the findings of the review committee shall be forwarded to the City Council and Board of Supervisors.

10. **Appeal of review or disapproval.**

When application is made for approval of a proposed development subject to this Agreement, either the applicant or a second governing body which also has jurisdiction for approval, may be aggrieved by any of the following:

1. The requirements imposed by a governing body as a condition of approval.
2. The denial of the application.

If the proposed development is disapproved by a governing body, such disapproval shall state how the proposed development is objectionable.

Either the applicant or an aggrieved governing body has the right to appeal to the district court within twenty (20) days after the date of the denial of the application or the date of the receipt by the applicant of the requirements for approval of the proposed development. Notice of appeal shall be served to the governing body in the manner provided for the service of original notice pursuant to the rules of civil procedure. The appeal shall be tried de novo as an equitable proceeding.

11. **Development in Multiple Service Areas.**

If a development is located partly within both the RP and NMUR areas, the policy and procedures of the most restrictive shall apply. For the purposes of this document, Non-Metro Urban Reserve (NMUR) is considered the most restrictive; the Rural Preserve (RP) is the least restrictive.

12. **28E Agreement on Streets Adjacent to Annexed Areas.**

Upon request of either the City or the County, a 28E agreement may be developed between the City and County to address collector and arterial roadways adjacent to newly developed areas. This is intended to accommodate traffic demands generated by the new development.

13. **Termination of Agreement.**

This agreement may be terminated by either the City or County by submitting a written notice of termination that shall specify a termination date that is not fewer than thirty (30) days from the date the notice is provided to the other party.

14. **Manner of Financing**

This agreement requires no financing arrangements between the parties because the review and approval processes outlined would be conducted separately by each party. The agreement does not require a separate entity to be established to administer the purpose of the agreement.

15. **Execution and recording of this agreement.**

This agreement shall be filed with the Secretary of the State of Iowa and with the Linn County Recorder in compliance with Chapter 28E of the Code of Iowa.

SIGNED: _____
Chair, Linn County Board of Supervisors

SIGNED: _____
Vice Chair, Linn County Board of Supervisors

SIGNED: _____
Linn County Board Supervisor

ATTEST: _____
Linn County Auditor

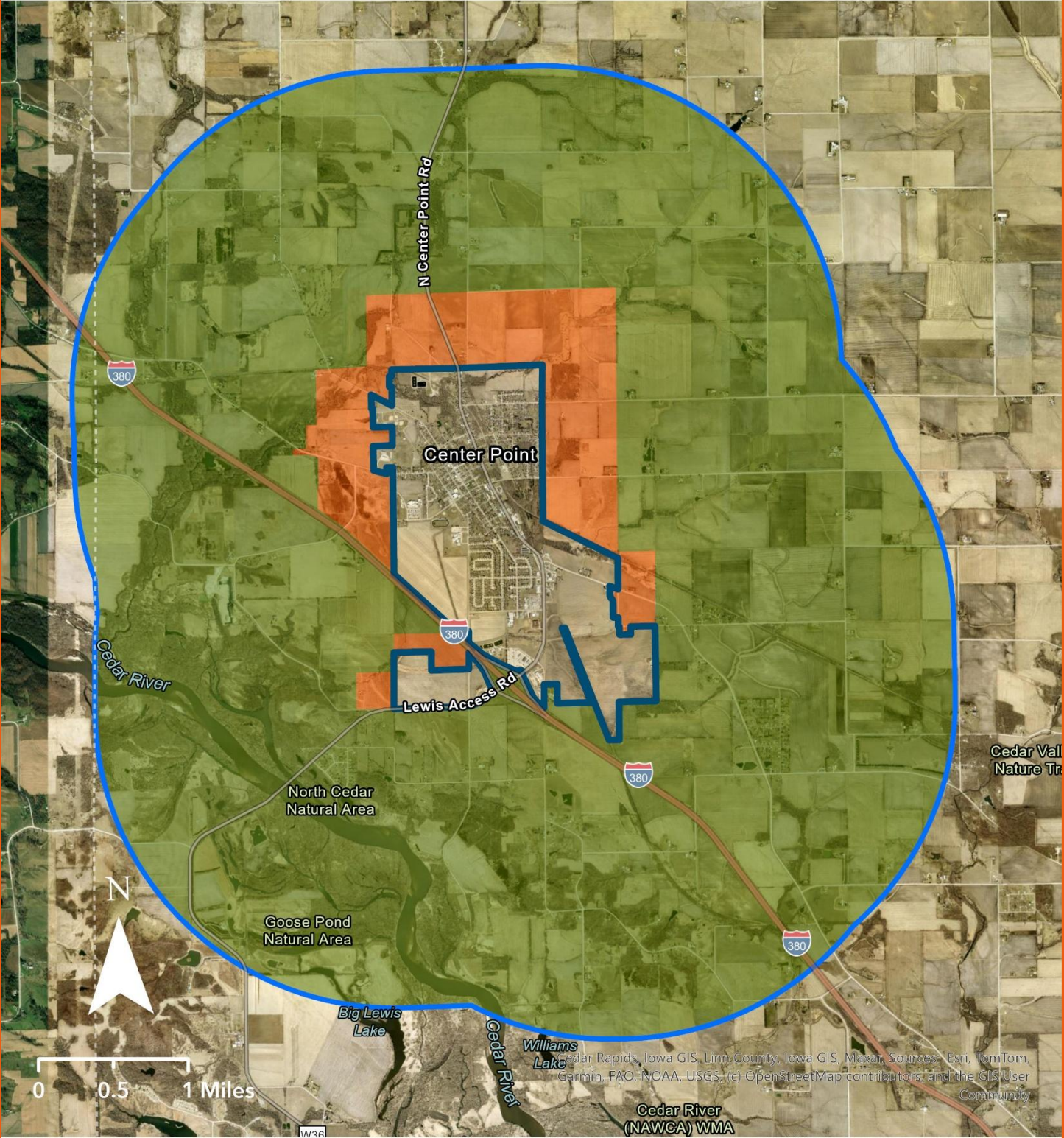
Date Signed: _____

SIGNED: _____
Mayor, City of Center Point

ATTEST: _____
City Administrator

Date Signed: _____

Linn County and City of Center Point Fringe Area Agreement Map



Legend

- Fringe Area, 2-Mile Radius
- Center Point
- Fringe Area
 - Non-Metro Urban Reserve
 - Rural Preserve



Prepared by
ECICOG
EAST CENTRAL IOWA
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
YOUR REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

July 2025

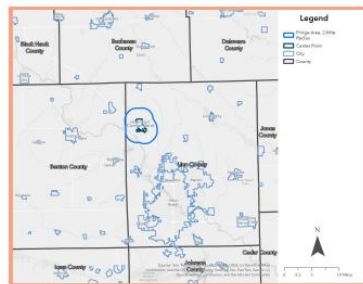
Appendix

Open House Posters

Fringe Area Planning and Agreements

Fringe Area

The fringe area is the area in the county within two miles of a city's corporate boundary.



Center Point's fringe area is shown in this map in a regional context. It is almost entirely within Linn County.

Purpose

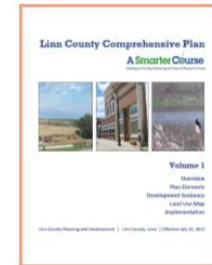
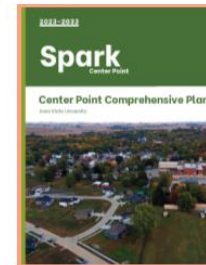
Fringe area agreements facilitate the orderly and coordinated development of land for a city environment, preservation and availability of agricultural land, and protection of environmentally sensitive areas. The agreement would be held between Linn County and the City of Center Point. **A fringe area plan is not an annexation plan.** It provides clarity for voluntary processes that can involve both jurisdictions.



Example of Incompatible Development



This image shows a subdivision in an unincorporated area of a county (not Linn County) that has very different development characteristics than the section highlighted of a nearby town. It will likely be a couple decades or more before the city is directly adjacent to the rural subdivision, but it could pose challenges to the expansion of the city and its infrastructure and services when/if that occurs.



Need

Center Point updated its comprehensive plan in 2023. With a fresh review of the community's current conditions and potential growth and development over the next ten years, now is a good time to establish a fringe area agreement to facilitate the orderly development of the city beyond its current boundaries. Linn County last updated its comprehensive plan, intended to cover the next 10 to 20 years, in 2013. The County will begin an update to its Future Land Use Map, a component of the comprehensive plan, in the near future.

Growth has occurred in Center Point and other parts of Linn County from 2010 to 2020, with the rates exceeding that of the state of Iowa. Clear development policies will facilitate the vision expressed in the City's and County's comprehensive plans.

Geography	2010 Population	2020 Population	Percent Change
Center Point	2,421	2,579	6.5%
Linn County	211,226	230,299	10.2%
Iowa	3,046,355	3,190,369	4.7%

Related Plans

Center Point Comprehensive Plan

The City's comprehensive plan highlighted three main strategies:

1. Addition of a community economic node
2. Addition of low- to medium-density housing
3. Creation of industrial area

Parts two and three relate strongly to land outside of and adjacent to the city. The plan set four core objectives:

1. Downtown Redevelopment
2. Growth & Future Development
3. Public Infrastructure
4. Economic Development

The parts of the plan themes and core objectives are highlighted in the images below.



Linn County Comprehensive Plan

Linn County's comprehensive plan does not have any specific development plans for the area around Center Point. Its general land use policies apply. The objectives from the plan that support fringe area planning are the following:

Economic Development and Employment Opportunities

Goal 2

Encourage the long-term viability of agriculture.

Objective 2.5

Determine those areas best suited for locating business.

Strategy: Direct most commercial and industrial development to the cities with adequate facilities and services to support their needs.

Resource Protection

Goal 2

Encourage the long-term viability of agriculture.

Objective 2.3

Discourage non-agricultural uses in the agricultural areas of the county; discourage scattered, leapfrog development.

Sustainable Development

Goal 1

Maximize the use of existing gray infrastructure and adopt innovative green infrastructure techniques

Objective 1.2

Coordinate standards and review processes with municipalities. County and city plans (and ordinances when practical) should be consistent and cohesive.

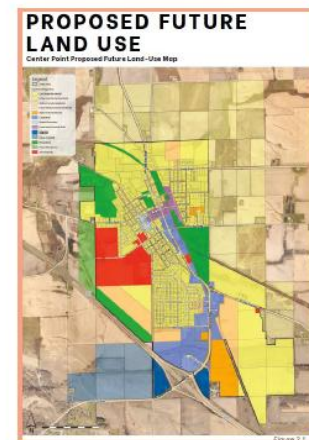
The comprehensive plan encourages the adoption of fringe area agreements and provides a definition for "Urban Service Areas" to support the orderly development of cities within Linn County.

Urban Service Area Designation

Linn County's Urban Service Area designation is intended for the areas surrounding Linn County's 18 cities. The land use designation is intended to support agricultural zoning and uses until such time as the land is needed for development consistent with an urban environment. The comprehensive plan states that land developed under County jurisdiction shall be developed in a manner compatible with the adjacent city.

Future Land Use Maps

A future land use map (FLUM) is part of a comprehensive plan that depicts the envisioned future use of designated areas. Unlike zoning, there are no regulations attached to a FLUM area; however, rezonings should support the vision described by the FLUM. The current future land use maps for both Center Point and Linn County have informed the Non-Metro Urban Reserve area of the proposed fringe area agreement.



Center Point FLUM Areas in Fringe Area

Low-Density Residential

Single-family residential, 1- to 5-dwelling units per acre. Allows

Industrial

Industrial development, warehouse, and distribution facilities.

Recreational

Parks, greens spaces, trails, and other recreational uses.

Linn County FLUM



Linn County FLUM Areas In Fringe Area

AA

Agricultural

Maintain or enhance the viability of agricultural operations.

CNRA

Critical Natural Resource Area

Conserve and protect "high-value" natural resource areas, e.g. floodplains, wetlands, natural prairie, etc.

NMUSA

Non-Metro Urban Services Area

Area likely needed for future urban development, adjacent to incorporated cities.

RDR3

Rural Residential Development 3 Acre

Allow for logical expansion of low-density, rural character residential development.

Proposed Agreement

Proposed Fringe Area Agreement

Linn County and Center Point have drafted an agreement to help guide development in the fringe area. The agreement divides the fringe area into two designations to guide development proposals based on proximity to the City and its urban services:

• Rural Preserve

The Rural Preserve is intended to support policies in the County's comprehensive plan, including the designations shown in the future land use map, and Unified Development Code. Land in this area is best suited for resource protection or limited development conforming to County design standards.

• Non-Metro Urban Reserve

The Non Metro Urban Reserve is intended to support policies in the City's comprehensive plan, including the designations shown in the future land use map, and zoning and subdivision ordinances. Land in this area is best suited to the orderly development of the urban environment.

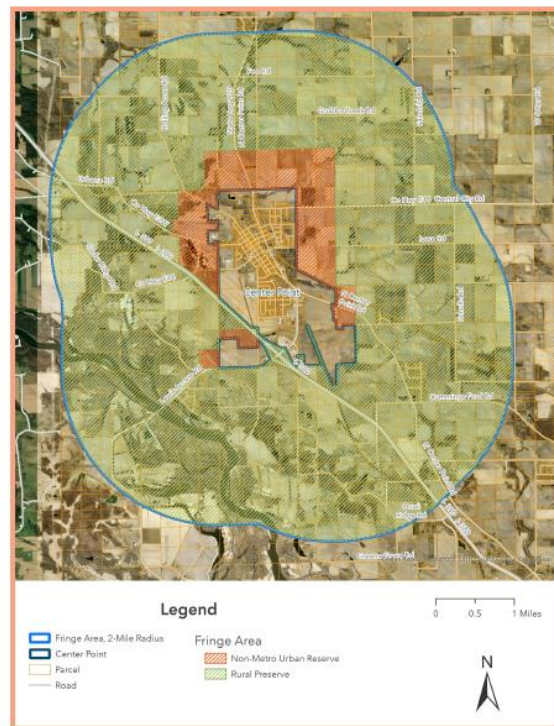
Development Types

Under the proposed fringe area agreement, the County will accept applications for the following processes in the Urban Reserve:

- Conditional use Permit
- Residential Parcel Split
- Land Preservation Parcel Split
- Subdivisions invoking the bisected lot provisions
- Rezoning supporting the above processes

Other development proposals in the Urban Reserve require the applicant to discuss annexation and concurrent zoning with the City. Developments involving commercial or residential that is consistent with an urban environment will be directed to the Urban Reserve.

Draft Fringe Area Agreement Map



Development Procedures

Subdivision Review

Subdivision is the division of parcels of land into smaller legal lots of record. The subdivision process generally requires certain improvements to the land—e.g. installation of private or public water and wastewater infrastructure, streets, utility easements, etc.—to support the zoning and potential uses of the smaller lots. Subdivision proposals will have to be approved by both the City and the County in both the Urban Reserve and Rural Preserve.

Zoning Review

Zoning is the regulation of use and bulk standards (e.g. structure size and placement) of lots within a zoning district. Most of the current zoning in the proposed Urban Reserve is the Agricultural zone, which serves the intent of the land use, i.e. preserving agricultural functions until it is developed for an urban environment. The County will have approval authority for rezonings in the fringe areas, and the City will have the opportunity to review and comment on rezoning applications. Zoning concurrent with annexation will be approved by the City. The County may comment on the proposed annexation.

Conditional Use Permit

A conditional use is use under a zoning district that is allowed following a review and approval process by the Board of Adjustment. This process allows the reviewing body to mitigate effects that might occur with a use or prevalence of a use within a district, e.g. limited commercial could be allowed within a primarily residential district if the effects were consistent with the surrounding area. Within the fringe area, the City would have the opportunity to review and comment on conditional use permit applications within the Urban Reserve.

Review and Approval Authority

	Procedure Type					
	Rezoning		Subdivision		CUP	
Area Designations	City	County	City	County	City	County
Rural Preserve	Review	Approval	Approval	Approval	N/A	Approval
Non-Metro Urban Reserve	Review ¹	Approval ¹	Approval ²	Approval	Review	Approval

²For all developments annexed into the City, Center Point has approval authority and County retains the ability to review and comment on the annexation. Development applications other than the exceptions noted in the "Development Types" section require the property owner to discuss annexation with the City. For developments in the NMUSA that do not require a discussion of annexation, the City has review authority and the County retains approval authority.

¹In accordance with the Code of Iowa, the City retains approval authority of subdivisions not annexed.

Public Input

Smart Growth

Center Point's growth and development can meet the vision of the community—to expand and diversify its economy, increase connectivity, and be an attractive community for residents and visitors—and the County's land use goals of directing commercial uses to cities and preserving agricultural land by supporting development that is contiguous with existing development. This is also consistent with Center Point's development historically. Disconnected, leapfrog development can increase the cost of infrastructure development and contribute to perceptions of urban sprawl. This poster includes examples of non-contiguous development at different distances in other communities. The maps, excluding the historic development map, are the same size and scale.

For reference, a quarter mile is about the length of 3.5 football fields.



This map shows the year homes were built in Center Point. In general, older homes, shown by lighter, yellow shades, are toward the middle of development within Center Point, and newer homes, shown by the darker red shades, are towards the outside of development.



This is an example of a development that is within a quarter-mile of a connected urban development. A portion also has about a half mile of unimproved land between developments.



This subdivision is about a quarter mile from other urban development.



This subdivision is about a half mile from other urban development.



This example contains multiple subdivisions that are a half mile or more from other urban development.

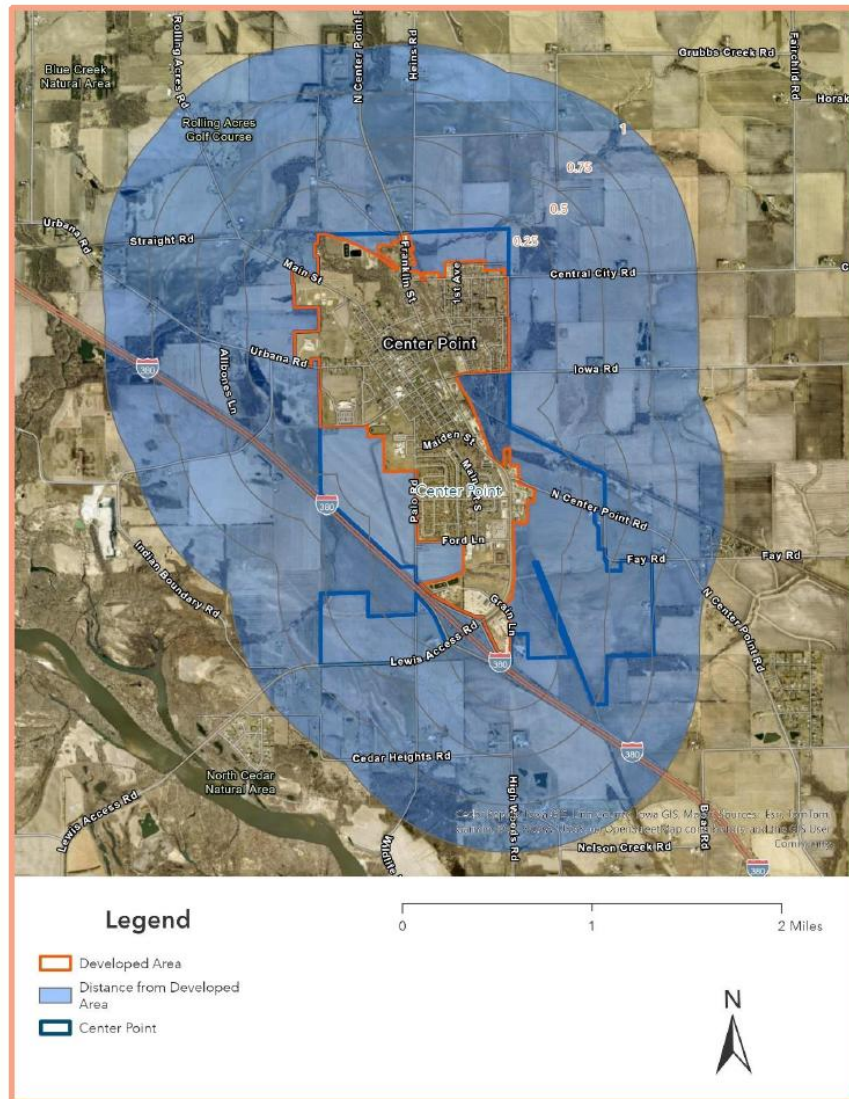


This development spur is contiguous with existing development at one end; however, it extends a mile-and-a-half along a corridor without connections to other nearby development.

Input

On the form provided, please, leave your feedback regarding the future growth and development of Center Point. Thank you for your participation.

Public Input Form



Public Input

The area shown in red is approximately the outline of the developed land in Center Point. The blue areas are buffer rings around the developed area at quarter-mile intervals. For reference, a quarter mile is about the length of 3.5 football fields.

1. When new development occurs, at what distance do you think it would feel like urban sprawl and affect Center Point's small-town character? **(Circle one)**

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| 0.25 miles | 0.5 miles |
| 0.75 miles | 1 mile |
| Over 1 mile | |

2. The Public Input poster shows an example of a development spur that extends in a narrow band along a corridor. Do you think that type of development would be consistent with Center Point's small-town character? **(Circle one)**

- | | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
|-----|----|

Additional questions on back

3. Circle the categories that apply to you:

Live in Center Point

Live in fringe area

Live in Linn County outside of fringe area

Own a business in Center Point

Own a business in the fringe area

Own a business in Linn County outside of fringe area

4. You may leave comments about the proposed fringe area agreement here:

Public Input Comments

Following are the responses to question 4 of the public input form.

- Center Point should only have any say in the current direction of growth already established toward the interstate. They need to stay in their lane and not try to turn a small town community into something that it isn't. They should not have a reach that far out of town. Residential, Ag or industry. They have already shown where they have built new developments and drew businesses away from the original downtown. Keep progressing toward interstate and leave everyone else alone.
- Only develop towards 380 interstate. There are multiple generational farm land that you should not be able to touch.
- We purchased 5.5 acres and had to go to city council to get approval to purchase it due to being within 2 miles of city limits and they said they had no plans to develop this direction before the county allowed us to purchase the land. We bought this as did many around us with the intention to do small farm/homesteading activities without having to worry about city regulations dictating what livestock we could have. If center point expanded in any direction but towards 380 it would go into existing farms and land where there are cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, and all other livestock. The entire reason the community exists is because people don't want to live in cedar rapids but still be near the big city. Growing into the rural areas defeats the entire point of this town.
- This does not benefit Center Point. The town has thrived off its familiar and homey charm. Expanding it in this way would not only be detrimental to the town's character, but may force folks out with the rise in property taxes that this will likely bring.
- We would be very supportive of new developments that do not include solar farms.
- Develop toward interstate. Leave agriculture lands alone. 2 mile boundary is way too much!
- Center Point needs to focus on redeveloping the run down areas of town. There's a lot of low density run down industrial areas and empty space around the old depot for example. They should be cleaning up the town instead of letting the core rot and creating bigger issues. The fringe area should be very small, 1/4 mile is plenty of space at the rate of growth we are seeing. We don't need to become a metropolis or "North Liberty North" It would be nice to have a little more local retail if we could attract that. Something besides dollar general and the grocery store.
- Before expanding into the urban reserve areas north, north east, and north west, to have a nicely planned and quaint small town feel like one, you must concentrate on developing the already incorporated areas in the southeast - especially across from the grocery store and car dealership. And preferably not some ugly industrial park. Is that really in the best interest of Center Point? Most people approach Center Point from 380 and being greeted with an "industrial town" - and making that the first focus, and making it seem as if that's "all of Center Point" isn't what I believe Center Point wants to be known as. I also agree with previous sentiments that there are random lots in CP that need fixed/improved. Thank you!
- I think this would be a great thing for center point and contribute to the growth of the community and also help our small businesses and schools with enrollment since we would gain new developments.
- No Urban sprawl. Leave the farmland be farmland.
- Keep a small town small
- Let's clean up the town first before we expand. There's plenty of existing space to use. Clean that up, get rid of the blight. If you need me to list al of the ways, just let me know.
- I would like to see the downtown area developed/improved.
- Want to keep Center Point small community.