

Online Guide to Iowa Zoning

project conducted by
Iowa State University
Extension and Outreach

project funded by
Iowa Finance Authority

<https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/izg>

Presenters

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- Gary Taylor, AICP, Iowa State University

Topics

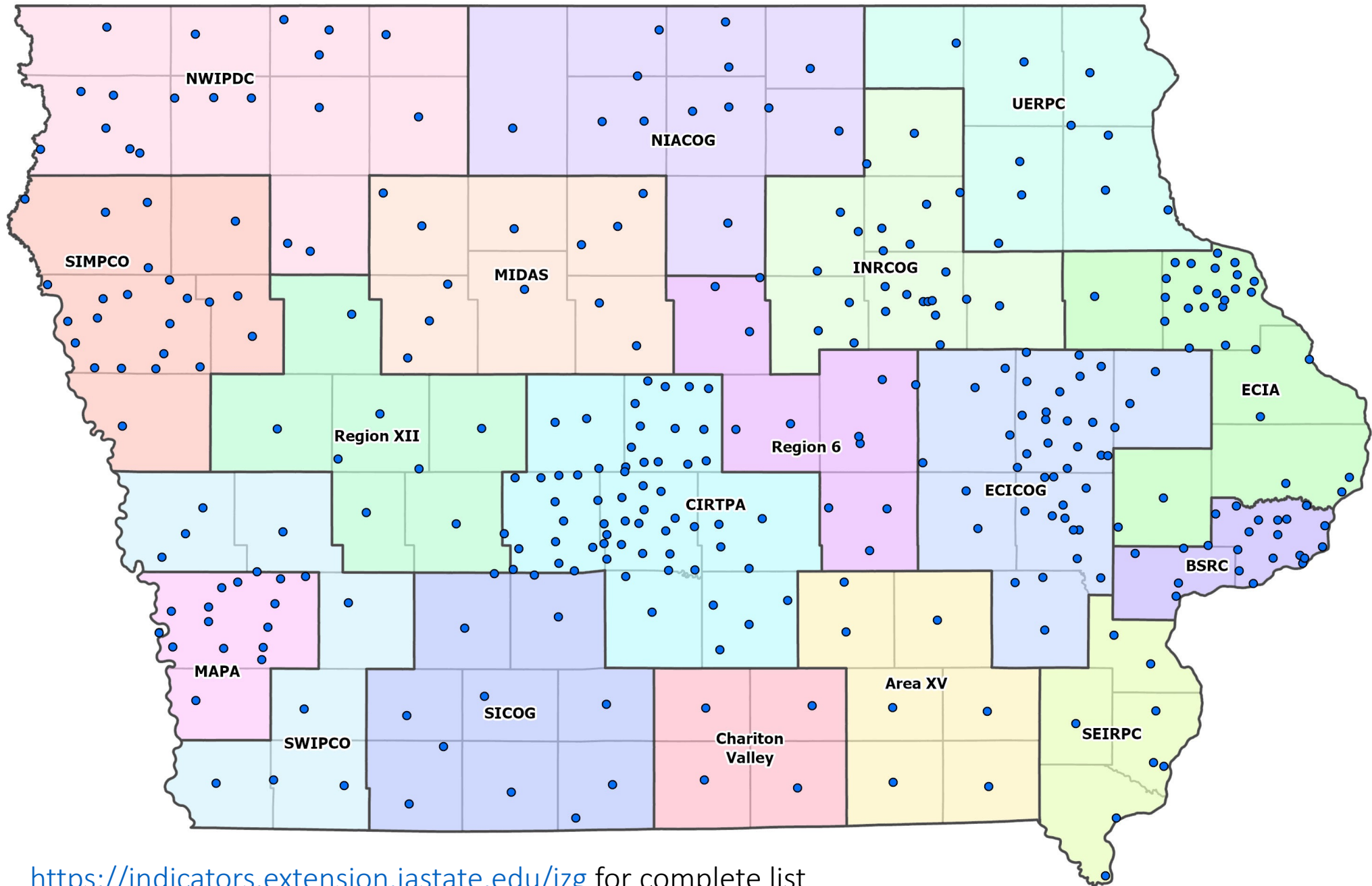
- Project History
- What the project is about
- How you can contribute (“The Ask”)

IFA/IEDA RFP 269-292 Requested Tasks

- Create an online Iowa zoning guide with a publicly available mapping tool illustrating key features and regulatory characteristics of zoning codes across units of local government.
 1. Develop an inventory and analysis of local zoning ordinances in Iowa
 2. Compile data to evaluate how local zoning ordinances may impact housing development in Iowa.

330 communities

1. Largest 250 cities in state (approximate population: 1,100 and above).
2. All cities in 10 largest population counties not already included in (1).
3. At least 1 city from each county (brings in Sidney (Fremont) and Keosauqua (Van Buren)).
4. 3 Census Designated Places (all above 2,000 population)
 1. Saylorville (Polk), Park View (Scott), Kent Estates (Muscatine)



<https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/izg> for complete list

Mapping Process

Mapping – 330 communities

1. We are collecting GIS zoning layers where available.
2. We are collecting PDFs and creating GIS zoning layers for communities that do not have their maps in GIS (PDFs from other sources such as a CAD drawing).
3. We will only digitize paper maps if and when work of 1 and 2 are completed.
4. We will not create maps for communities where none exist.
5. We will not use maps where adoption/legal validity is uncertain.
6. We will clearly post that these are not official regulatory documents.

Host on ISU server

- Using ESRI products (ArcGIS, Experience Builder)
- ISU/IFA maintain control over data.
- ***This is a snapshot in time***, but it will allow us to access and update at-will. Allows us to modify, add, link datasets for future research.

Coding the Codes

Research suggests several ways in which zoning may impact housing development in a given community*

- Amount of land zoned exclusively for Single-family detached relative to that zoned for higher residential densities.
- Requiring special use permits (public hearings generally) for higher density projects vs. by-right development
 - Adds considerable time to approval process.
 - Opportunities for NIMBYism.
- Minimums that ↑ housing prices
 - Lot sizes
 - Frontage
 - Setbacks
 - Floor area
 - Parking
- No provisions for
 - Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Mixed use
 - Encouraging affordable housing

We are coding regulations for each district in each city:

- Type of district
 - Residential only
 - Mixed residential/non-residential
 - Nonresidential
 - Agricultural
 - Planned Development
- Residential units per lot allowed
 - Single-family detached
 - Duplex
 - Triplex
 - (9+ units)
- Special use permits vs. by-right development.
- Zone allows
 - Manufactured homes (single)
 - Mobile homes (single)
 - Mobile/manufactured home parks
 - Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Work/live spaces
 - Tiny homes
 - Group/senior living (nursing homes, assisted living, 55+ communities)
- Minimums/maximums
 - Densities
 - Lot sizes
 - Setbacks
 - Frontage/lot width
 - Floor area
 - Parking spaces per d/u

Aggregate districts across community/across state:

- % of total land area zoned.....
 - Residential only
 - Mixed residential/non-residential
 - Residential prohibited
- % of total land area that allows.....
 - Single-family exclusively
 - Duplex
 - Triplex
 - (9+ more units)
- % of land area that requires special use permits for higher density projects vs. by-right development.
- % of total land area that allows.....
 - Manufactured homes
 - Mobile homes
 - Mobile/manufactured home parks
 - Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Work/live spaces
 - Tiny homes
 - Group living facilities (senior living)
- Averages
 - Lot sizes
 - Setbacks
 - Frontage
 - Floor area
 - Parking requirements

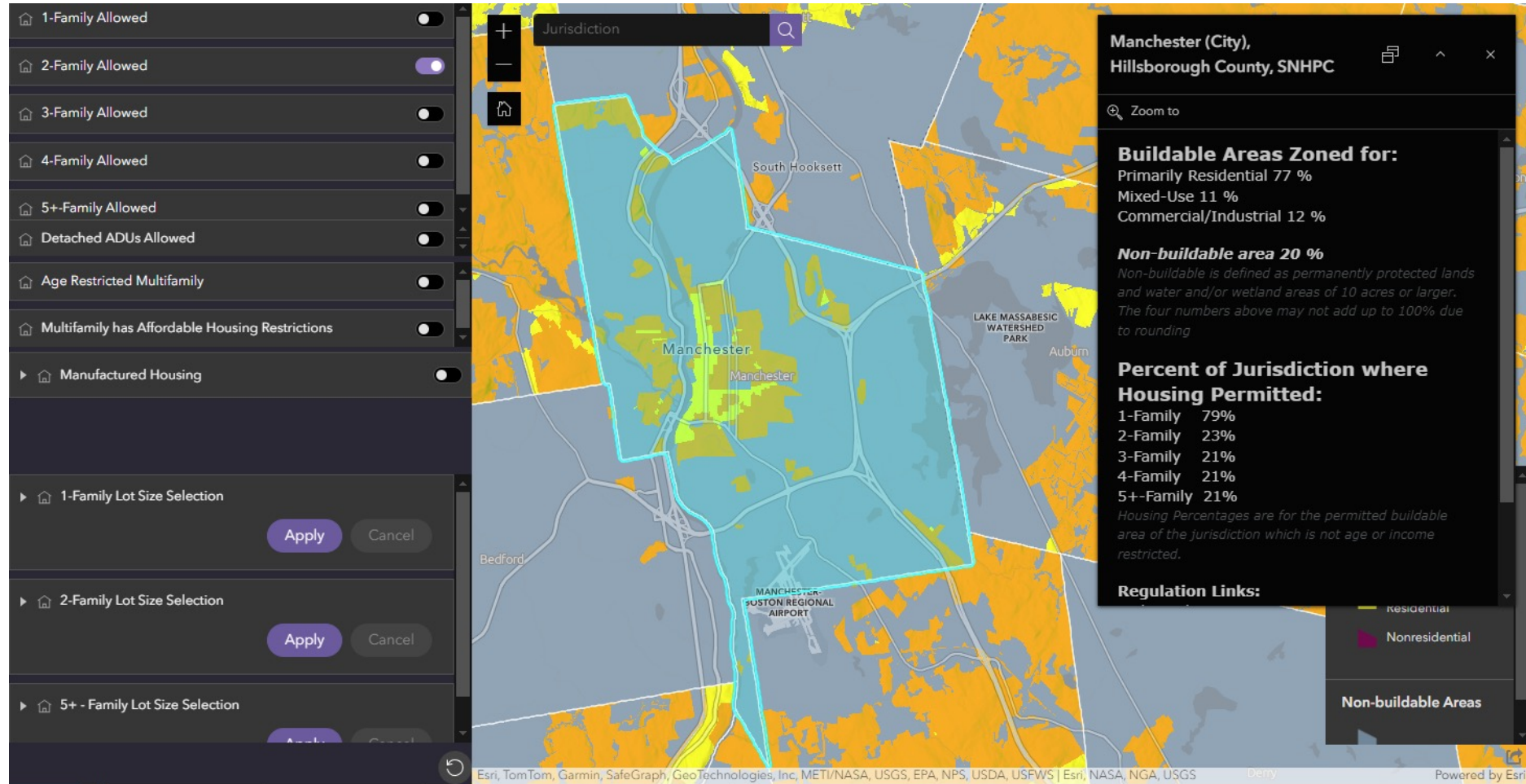
Visualizing results

Manchester, NH

Info block on the right gives zoning statistics for the highlighted region.

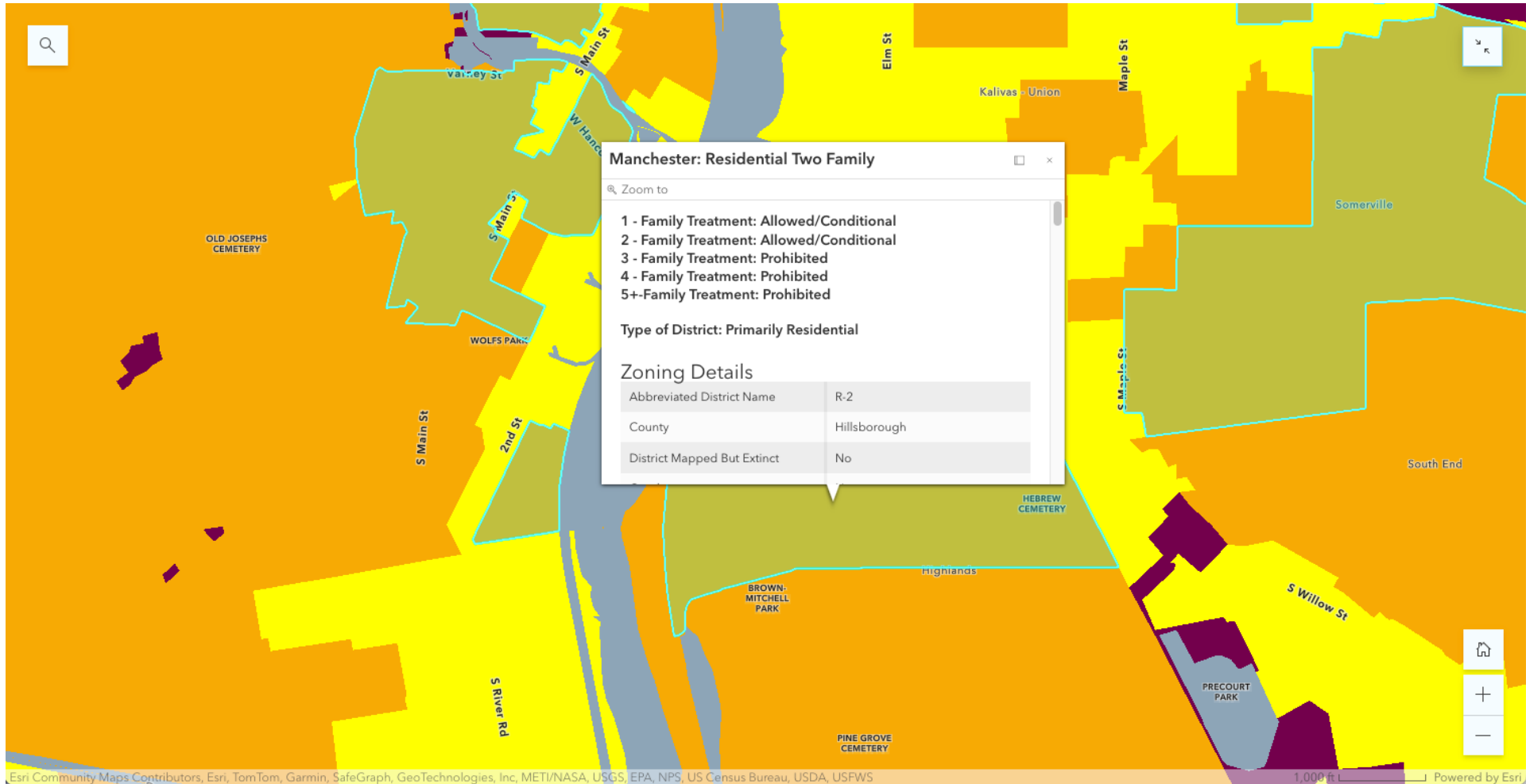
We will include indices results in info block.

The filter set on the left will show/hide zoning units where that category is permitted.



Manchester, NH

Clicking on district gives data on attributes of that district.



Cataloging zoning maps shows us the presence/absence of these zoning attributes, but it does not, by itself, capture all the factors affecting housing in our study communities.

We will also create a set of indices based on available datasets (where available at city-level):

- Jobs to housing (time series, various approaches)
- New housing starts per 1,000 population (time series)
- Median house price to median HH income (time series)
- Median gross rent to median HH income (time series)
- Supply of SFH (in months)
- Vacancy rates
- Age of housing stock
- Average household sizes
- Short-term rentals
- Tenure in home
- Construction materials costs over time
- Interest rate changes

Examples of datasets. Work is exploratory.

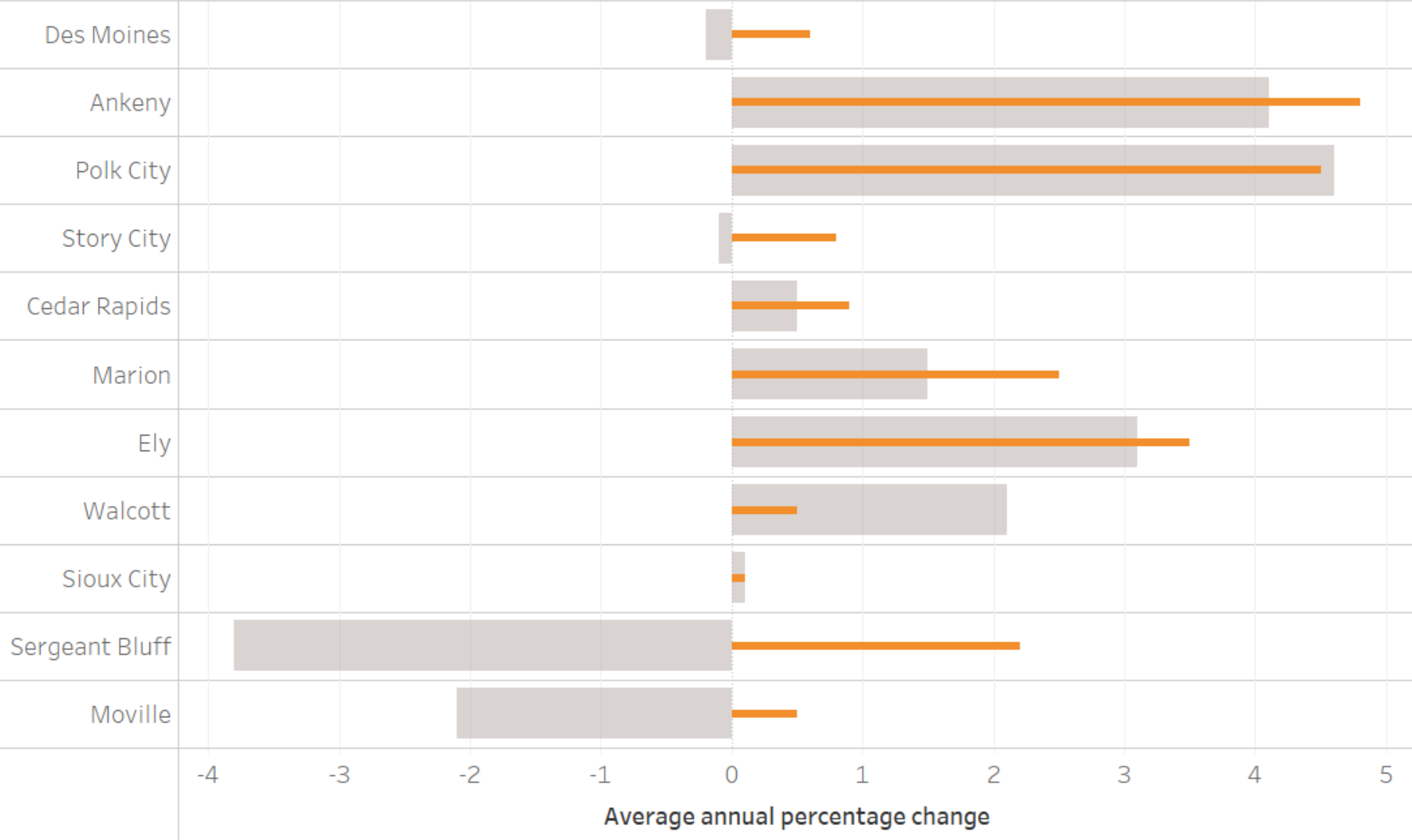
Work, data collected by others...

- Center for Neighborhood Technology
 - The Housing and Transportation (H+T[®]) Affordability Index: <https://htaindex.cnt.org/>
- Federal Housing Finance Agency
 - Local Price Dynamics <https://www.fhfa.gov/DataTools>
- Whitehouse.gov
 - Alleviating Supply Constraints in the Housing Market
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/cea/written-materials/2021/09/01/alleviating-supply-constraints-in-the-housing-market/>
- Congressional Research Service
 - U.S. Housing Supply: Recent Trends and Policy Considerations
<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47617>

Jobs in community - 2000 compared with **Jobs in community - 2020**
Housing units - 2000 **Housing units - 2020**

- The fraction is a standardization that allows us to compare communities without regard to population size.
- The time comparison indicates whether housing is keeping pace with job growth.

Annual Rates of Housing and Job Growth, 2000-2020



Measure Names
■ Housing rate (2000-20)
■ Job rate (2002-20)

Rate of change - Jobs in community – 2000-20

compared with

Rate of change – Housing units in community 2000-20

Housing and Population Data:
 2000 and 2020 Decennial Census, U.S. Census Bureau.

Jobs Data:
 OnTheMap Application
 U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-2021) [computer file]. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program [distributor], accessed on 2/13/24 at <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov>. LODS 8.1 [version]

Comparisons by typologies

- Core city
- Suburbs
- Exurbs
- Rural
- Others?

We will link these datasets and indices to the map and code data for each community.

Project Timeline

- Data collection through Fall 2024.
- Coding and mapping now through Summer 2025
- Web-mapping application publicly available Summer 2025.
- Final report with results posted October 2025.

How to share zoning texts (“The Ask”)

Contribute Zoning (and Restricted Residence District) Texts:

- Email file as an attachment to: iowa_Zo.gdao5l30io5ep1f7@u.box.com
- Format: PDF or Word
- Preferred File Naming Convention: **[City Name]_Zoningtext.pdf**
- For communities with restricted Residence Districts, the preferred file naming convention: **[City Name]_RRDtext.pdf**

How to share zoning maps (“The Ask, pt. 2”)

Geographic Data Files:

- Email file as an attachment to: Iowa_Zo.5v6xyi8r88rf9yv6@u.box.com
- Formats: Zip (.zip) archive of: Shapefiles (.shp), Geodatabase files (.gdb)
- If sending a shapefile (.shp), please include the following associated files:
 - .dbf (attribute data)
 - .prj (coordinate system information)
 - Other relevant files (if applicable)
 - Please ZIP all files together and send as a single .zip file with the preferred file naming convention: **[City Name]_Zoningmap.zip**

How to share zoning maps (“The Ask, pt. 2”)

PDF files of Zoning Maps (only if geographic data files are unavailable):

- Email file as an attachment to: iowa_Zo.5v6xyi8r88rf9yv6@u.box.com
- Preferred File Naming Convention: **[City Name]_Zoningmap.pdf**
- *If we receive a .pdf map from you (instead of GIS files) we may follow up with you for more information.*

Organizing data collection by CoG region

Data collection nagging schedule (Please, skip the line and avoid the nag!)

- Week of June 10
 - ECICOG
- Week of June 17
 - INRCOG
 - Area XV
 - UERPC
- Week of June 24
 - SEIRPC
 - NIACOG
 - Bi-State
- Week of July 1
 - Region 6
 - ECIA
- Week of July 8
 - SWIPCO
 - SICOG
 - MAPA
 - Chariton Valley
- Week of July 15
 - SIMPCO
 - NWIPDC
- Week of July 22
 - Region XII
 - MIDAS
- Mid-Iowa doughnut hole ongoing.

Contact us first if...

If you are in the process of, or are planning a major zoning code rewrite of a community to be completed before December 31, 2024 please contact us instead of uploading your current documents.

Project leads

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Questions