

Chapter 3

Community Character



INTRODUCTION

Community character is determined by the people, characteristics, landmarks, and intangible elements that make the community a great place to live. While there is no exact formula for community character, a community's unique characteristics are often a key reason of why people choose to live where they do or why they choose to visit certain locations.

Having a particular community identity, especially in terms of what the community looks like, is becoming even more important in a world where everyplace tends to look like everyplace else. Places with strong community character break the trend of blandness and sameness, giving the community a strong sense of place and identity. Communities with unique, identifiable characteristics are more attractive to people and businesses.

Throughout the input process many residents listed the small town atmosphere and the closeness of the people as things they liked most about Maquoketa. The goal of this chapter is to identify and build on the community's unique characteristics.

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

A fundamental part of understanding a city is understanding the people that make up the community. The field of demography is the statistical study of human populations. Analysis of demographic information and understanding trends revealed by that information is key to understanding the community and planning for its future needs.

Population

Total population is the most important piece of demographic information for a city. A basic count of people helps city leaders understand the community's needs for infrastructure and services. Throughout its history as a city, Maquoketa has experienced extended periods of steady population growth, followed by long periods of very little growth. Historical decennial census counts in Figure 1 reveal that Maquoketa is currently in a slow growth period. Maquoketa's population has changed very little since 1990, increasing by only eleven people over 20 years. Annual population estimates produced by the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) indicate a continuation of this trend through 2020, showing a slight decline in the city's total population between 2010 and 2017.

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Lack of population growth is not a problem that is unique to Maquoketa. Across Iowa and the Midwest small and medium sized cities are dealing with the challenges related to slow population growth or decline. In general, small town and rural populations are getting smaller while metropolitan area populations continue to grow larger.

Having the ability to attract new residents and maintaining population is important for small communities. Population growth encourages economic growth by creating demand for housing and expanding the customer base for local businesses. Local employers also depend on the area's population to fill their workforce.

Population growth can also help the city financially. Increased economic activity ultimately leads to a larger tax base that allows the community to expand services while keeping tax rates low.

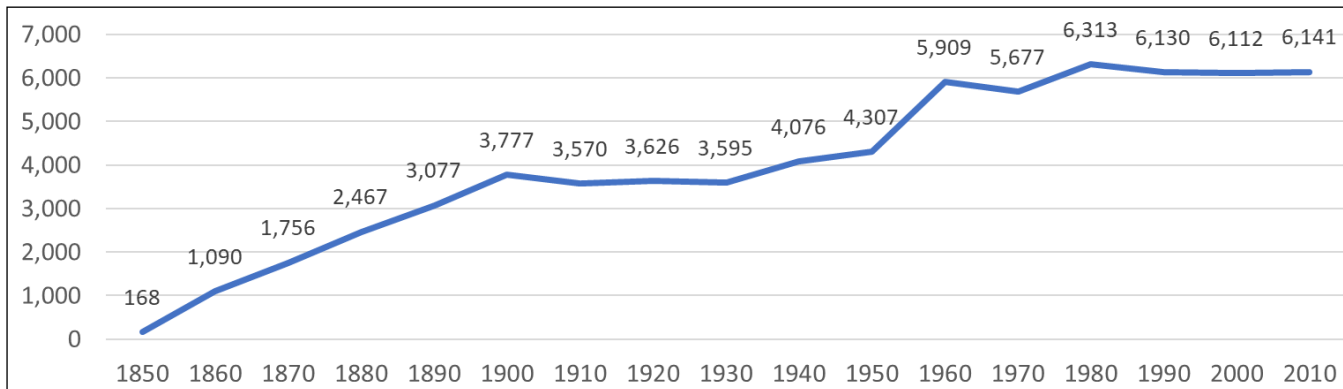


Figure 1. Maquoketa Historical Population

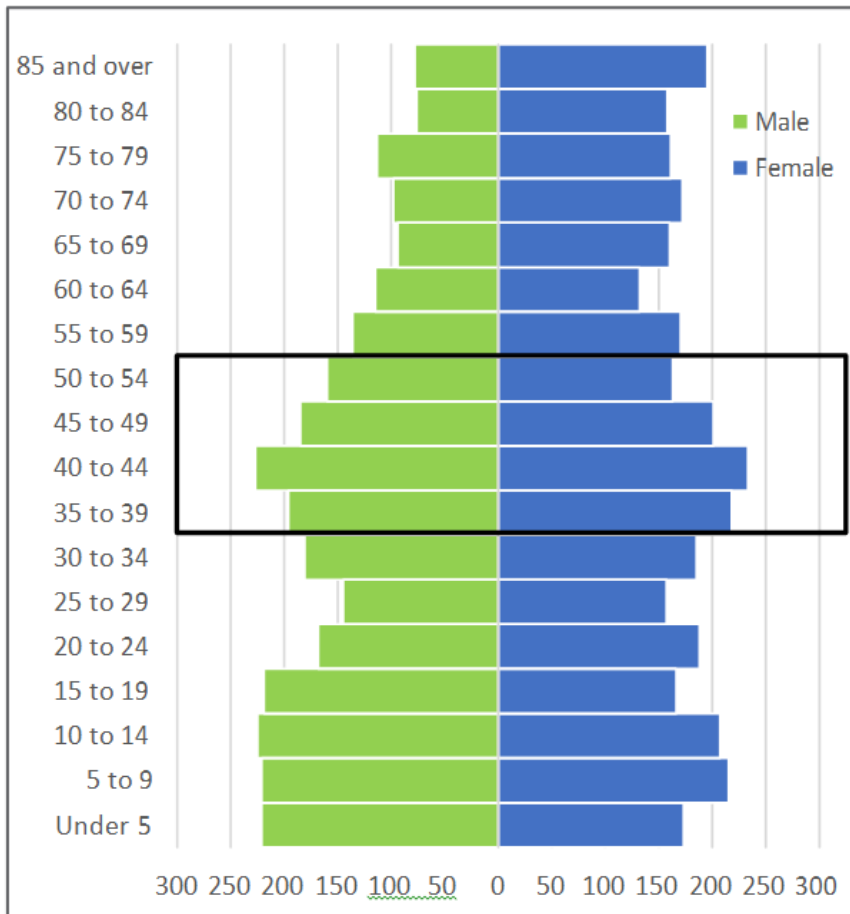
3.

Addressing population growth will be one of the most important issues for Maquoketa's future and should be accounted for in all components of the comprehensive plan. The first step to addressing population is understanding the underlying factors behind the current population trend. Many of Maquoketa's demographic trends in recent years have been driven by changes in the makeup of the city's population, especially related to age. According to Census counts, Maquoketa's population is getting older on average. In the 2000 Census, the median age in Maquoketa was 39.7. By 2010, the median age had increased to 41.0.

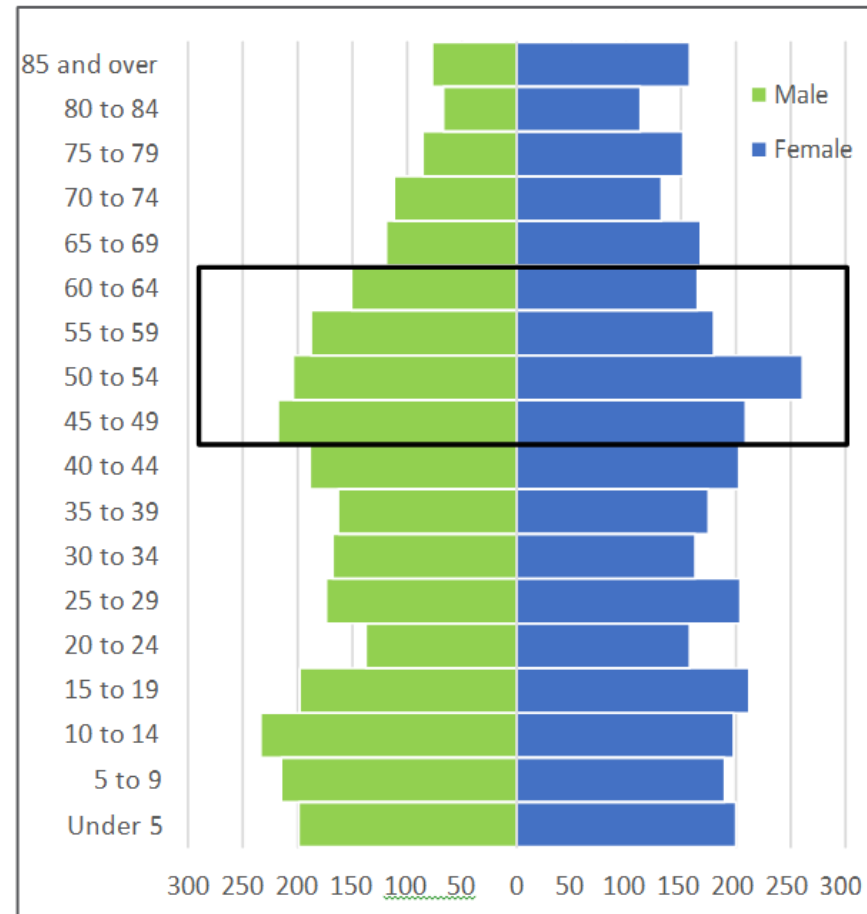
The increase of median age is due in part to longer lifespans, lower birth rates, and the aging of the Baby Boomer Generation. The term Baby Boomer Generation refers to the demographic cohort that was born in the two decades following World War II (approximately 1946-1964). During this period, birth rates increased significantly across the United States resulting in an age cohort that is much larger than the generations before or after.

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Breaking Maquoketa's 2010 census population into five-year age groups in Figure 2, the Baby Boomers are represented by the large bump in the 35-54 year-old age groups. Moving forward ten years to the 2010 Census in Figure 3, the bump from the Baby Boomers has moved ahead and is now in the 45-64 age group. As we approach the 2020 Census, the chart will again move forward ten years and the Baby Boomers will be 55-75 years old.



Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000
Figure 2. 2000 Population by 5-Year Age Groups



Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000
Figure 3. 2010 Population by 5-Year Age Groups

3.

Population Change

The aging trend impacts the city's total population in several ways. First, having a large population cohort move into ages 65 and beyond will affect population change. The three basic factors of population change are births, deaths, and migration. Births and deaths are sometimes referred to as natural population change. With an older population death rates tend to be higher and birth rates lower. Table I shows the number of Maquoketa births and deaths as reported by the Iowa Department of Public Health from 1999 to 2017. Maquoketa has had more deaths than births every year going back to 1999. With more deaths than births, Maquoketa has relied on the third factor of population change, migration, to maintain or grow its population.

Of the three population change factors, migration is the most difficult to measure. People move from place to place often and there is no official way to track who is coming and going. However, we can create an estimate of migration by comparing Census population counts with birth and death records.

In 2000, Maquoketa's population was 6,112. Between 2000 and 2009 the city had 796 births and 1,065 deaths. If no migration had occurred, the City's population would have fallen to by 296 to 5,816. However, population did not fall during this time, it grew to 6,141. The difference between the 2020 population predicted by natural change and the 2010 population reported by the Census is assumed to be the result of migration. Based on this estimate, we can assume that between 2000 and 2010 325 more people moved in to Maquoketa than moved out. The chart in Figure 4 illustrates the migration estimate.

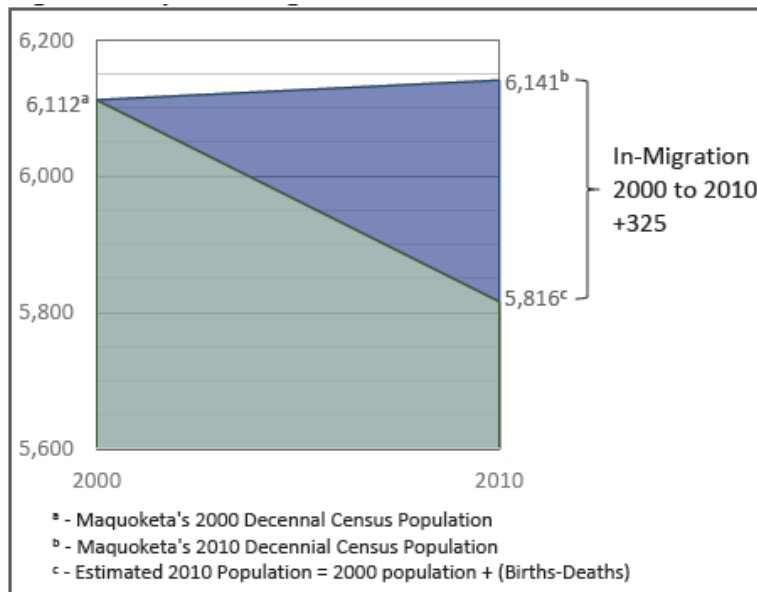


Figure 4. Maquoketa Migration Estimate 2000-2010

The take-away from the migration estimate is that Maquoketa depends heavily on migration for population growth. With negative natural migration, the city has needed people to move into the community to make up the difference. Looking ahead, the trend of negative natural population change will likely accelerate. By 2040, the youngest Baby Boomers will be 75 and the oldest will be 95. As this large group continues to age, the community can expect to see more deaths than births and the community will need even more migration to maintain its population.

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Table I. Maquoketa Births and Deaths

Year	Births	Deaths	Net
2017	88	90	-2
2016	68	74	-6
2015	83	108	-25
2014	79	109	-30
2013	66	100	-34
2012	86	111	-25
2011	80	100	-20
2010	63	105	-42
2009	91	117	-26
2008	68	106	-38
2007	88	91	-3
2006	84	114	-30
2005	65	120	-55
2004	67	102	-35
2003	85	102	-17
2002	70	106	-36
2001	80	102	-22
2000	71	105	-34
1999	69	104	-35

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health¹

Population Impacts on Housing

The aging trend impacts household size, demand for housing, and available housing units. Older populations tend to live in smaller households. For many older people, children have grown up and moved out, and one or two person households are common. The city needs in-migration to compensate for natural population decline, but smaller household size keeps most housing occupied. This means that there are not enough available housing units in the City to house enough newcomers to significantly grow the City's total population. Adding housing will be crucial to growing the City's population. Issues related to future housing strategies are discussed in detail in the Housing Chapter.

Quality of Life

In addition to adding housing, addressing quality of life is essential for attracting new residents to the community. For many people, location of work determines the general area where a person may live, but the exact location they choose to make their home within that often comes down to quality of life factors.

A unique community identity along with improving amenities like shopping, indoor and outdoor recreation, and a vibrant downtown would provide opportunities for Maquoketa to differentiate itself from other communities in the area and attract more people to the community. Organizations like Maquoketa Hometown Pride can help by engaging residents of the community and identifying the things that make Maquoketa unique. These groups can also help promote the City and help the community create strategies to build on existing assets.

Active Resident Recruitment

Efforts to improve the quality of the life can be bolstered by efforts to promote the city's unique aspects and encourage new people to move to the community. Many communities have established programs to attract employers, but few have implemented similar programs to recruit new residents. University of Minnesota Extension has conducted research on rural migration and resident recruitment². The researchers have compiled a list of resident recruitment strategies implemented by various communities.

- Organizing volunteers to welcome new people to the community. This could be as simple as taking new residents out to lunch as a way to welcome them to the community and learn about their interests and talents.
- Working with local community organizations like the Rotary Club or other groups to involve new residents and match up their talents and passions with community needs.
- Building housing for the elderly to free up single family homes, which would then be matched with young families moving to the community.
- Offering newcomers free passes to municipal recreation facilities, discounts from local merchants, and several months' free utility service.
- Courting alumni at school reunions by informing them of retiring businesses and homes for sale.
- Use marketing to promote the positive aspects of living in a small community like Maquoketa vs. living in a larger city.

Jackson County Tomorrow

In the spring of 2018, The Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities, part of the University of Iowa's School of Urban and Regional Planning, published a report entitled Jackson County Tomorrow. Jackson County Tomorrow is a strategic plan focused on attracting young families to live in Jackson County. A team of University of Iowa students spent several months engaging community leaders and speaking directly with local families to develop a list of recommendations for young family attraction and retention. Jackson County Tomorrow recommendations include:

- Ensure that Jackson County residents of today and tomorrow have a variety of well-maintained housing options.
- Ensure that high-quality childcare opportunities are available and affordable to all residents.
- Promote engagement and entrepreneurship among the county's youth, including professional development opportunities for young workers.
- Increase the region's ability to financially invest in itself and ensure that business transitions proceed smoothly.
- Connect both current and potential residents with the resources and information they want with the most up-to-date methods available.



Maquoketa Farmer's Market

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Throughout the public engagement process, Maquoketa residents identified an abundance of opportunities to engage in artistic and entertainment offerings throughout the year. Maquoketa can use the arts as a tool to further develop the community's unique identity.

Public Art

Communities can use public art to gain cultural, social and economic value. Public art can be a key factor in establishing a unique and culturally active place. It can create civic icons, but can also transform everyday spaces like playgrounds, hospitals, water treatment facilities, and streets into expressions of culture and creativity.

Ohnward Fine Arts Center

The Ohnward Fine Arts Center is a 29,800 square foot performing arts venue located on E. Platt Street. Opened in 2004, the center was built using a combination of community donations, grant funding, and volunteer labor. The center's theater seats 841 and hosts music and theatrical performances throughout the year.



Mural on Main Street

Maquoketa Art Experience

The Maquoketa Art Experiences is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to arts education, fostering appreciation of the arts and to building community by engaging the residents of Maquoketa and surrounding areas in diverse creative activities. The MAE opened its facility at 124 S. Main Street in 2008. The MAE hosts various workshops, classes, demonstrations, presentations, performances and events. The MAE also features a gallery with rotating exhibits.

Community Festivals and Events

Throughout the year Maquoketa hosts a series of events that provide entertainment and bring the community together. Events include the Summer Concert Series, the Jackson County Fair, the Timber City Adventure Race, Maqtoberfest, and several others.

Codfish Hollow

Codfish Hollow is a unique live music venue located just outside of Maquoketa. The venue attracts people from all over the country to see musicians perform in a barn.



"Gables" Art Installation in the Greenspace

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Tri-county vendors are also on site at Codfish Hollow selling local, hand crafted artisan/ artist produced arts and crafts, in addition to local food vendors.

Old City Hall Gallery

Old City Hall Gallery is an art gallery located in a three story building that was once Maquoketa's city hall. The gallery features works by owners Rose Frantzen and Charles Morris.



2019 Timber City Adventure Race



Nathaniel Rateliff and the Night Sweats perform at Codfish Hollow

COMMUNITY HISTORY

Over its 162 years Maquoketa has developed a rich culture that makes the City an interesting and unique place. Today, evidence of the community's history can be found throughout the City. Historical buildings, museums, and landmarks all serve as a reminder of the important people and events that have shaped Maquoketa into the community we know today.

Preserving and celebrating Maquoketa's unique historical features is an important part of the city's future plans. Maquoketa's historical buildings and neighborhoods give the community a strong sense of place that sets Maquoketa apart from other similar cities.



Main Street Maquoketa in the 1950s

Historical Buildings

Maquoketa has twenty-seven buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of the buildings listed on the National Register date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Maquoketa grew rapidly in its first fifty years as a city, and as a result, the city is home to many examples of commercial and residential architecture from this period. Prominent listings include the Decker Hotel, the Hurst Hotel, the First National Bank Building, the Maquoketa Public Library, and the West Pleasant Street Historic District. In addition to its National register listings, the city also has many historically significant buildings and structures. The City has applied to have the Downtown District listed on the National register of Historic Places. The National Parks Service is currently reviewing the application.



First National Bank Building, Built 1920

Historic Preservation

Preserving the community's important historical features requires effort from the community and funding. Several programs are available to help the community with its preservation efforts.

Maquoketa Historic Preservation Commission

The City of Maquoketa created the Maquoketa Historic Preservation Commission to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the recognition, enhancement, and perpetuation of sites and districts of historical and cultural significance. The five member volunteer board has several powers including: conduct inventory studies, recommend listing of districts or sites in the National Register of Historic Places, acquire historic properties, and preserve, restore, maintain, and operate historic properties owned by the commission.

Tax Incentives

Tax credits and exemptions are available to encourage the reuse of historic properties, while retaining historic character-defining features. The State Tax Credit, Federal Tax Credit and County Tax Exemption programs contribute to the revitalization and preservation of historic properties across the state. The three programs use the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings and the Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Multiple program use is encouraged.³

State Tax Credit

The State Historic Preservation Office of Iowa administers the State Historic Preservation and Cultural and Entertainment District Tax Credit Program



(HPCED) in partnership with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). The program has a multi-part application process which offers a fully refundable and transferable tax benefit for up to 25% of the qualified rehabilitation expenses for the sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Federal Tax Credit

The State Historic Preservation Office partners with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) who administers the Federal Historic 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit. The amount of credit available under this program equals 20% of the qualifying expenses of the rehabilitation.

Property Tax Exemption

The State Historic Preservation Office administers the County Historic Property Tax Exemption Program in partnership with County Boards of Supervisors. The program offers a local property tax incentive for the sensitive "substantial rehabilitation" of historic buildings. It includes a four year "freeze" on the property tax increase, followed by phasing in the increased tax for the adjusted value post rehabilitation by one fourth each year over the next four years.

Clinton Engines

At its peak Clinton Engines was major part of Maquoketa's economy. Now it is part of the community's history. The factory, located on a twelve acre site on the south side of Maquoketa, produced over 18 million small engines between 1950 and 1999. The Administration Building is the only surviving building on the site and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building was donated to the City of Maquoketa in 2000 and houses the Clinton Engines Museum. The museum features exhibits and activities ranging from an interactive go-kart race to building your own model engine.⁴

The Clinton Engines Museum is also home to the LaMotte Depot. The depot was built in La Motte in 1910 but left empty after the rail line closed in 1936. The Jackson County Historical Society acquired the building and moved it to the Clinton Engines site in 2015. Volunteers donated 2,250 hours to restore the depot and the Historical Society opened it to the public in September 2017. The Iowa State Historical Society lists the LaMotte Depot as the last remaining narrow-gauge depot in the state.⁵

LaMotte Depot

HOUSEHOLD DISPOSAL OPPORTUNITIES

Bring items for disposal or recycling to Public Works on May 11th from 8am-11am.

Items not accepted at Public Works: hazardous household waste, remodeling material, rocks, bricks, concrete. See website for more details.

ALL AGES EVENT!

KEEP MAQUOKETA BEAUTIFUL

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

SPRING CLEAN UP DAY
SATURDAY, MAY 11
8AM-11AM

Sign up online or come to the YMCA at 7:30am for coffee, donuts and your assignment. Please bring gardening gloves, rakes, and protective clothing.

THANK YOU LUNCH IN THE GREENSPACE: 11AM

MAQHTP.COM
maquoketahtp@gmail.com | 563.652.4549

MAQUOKETA Hometown Pride

COMMUNITY SAFETY

By nearly all measurable standards, Maquoketa is a safe community. For violent crime and property crime, the City is at or below average rates for Iowa and the United States.⁶ However, most people define safety based on how they feel rather than crime statistics. Do people feel safe in their homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools? Are people able to move through the community without concern for personal safety? Perceptions of safety can vary from person to person, and in many cases addressing safety goes beyond policing and law enforcement.

Results of the Community Survey indicate that most people feel Maquoketa is a safe city overall, but there are some areas of concern. When asked if Maquoketa was safe place to live 12% strongly agreed, 66% agreed, 16% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed. Elsewhere in the survey, respondents ranked Reduce Crime / Substance Abuse the second out of a list of fifteen important priorities for the future of the community.

Communication among neighbors is key for community safety. Neighbors can work together to defuse conflicts before they escalate to a level where police need to be involved. Community events like festivals and concerts can help build community. These events also provide opportunities for law enforcement to develop rapport with the community.

Building community pride by improving the appearance of neighborhoods can make people feel safer within neighborhoods. Improving neglected properties and cleaning up litter can improve perceptions of safety and events like Maquoketa Spring Clean Up Day encourage residents to take pride in ownership of their neighborhood.

The Maquoketa Police Department employs a School Resource Officer that provides police service to schools and works to develop a positive rapport between the police department and students. The SRO acts in a preventative and responsive capacity but also assists students with problem solving and decision making techniques.

Many Maquoketa residents reported concerns relating to substance abuse and mental health. These issues have been growing across the United States, but are difficult to address because of limited public understanding and lack of critical services. In many cases law enforcement must deal with issues that could have been more appropriately addressed by healthcare professionals. Improving access to services can save lives, improve overall public health, and reduce crime. The Area Substance Abuse Council provides prevention, treatment, and recovery services to the community.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are intended to guide the City of Maquoketa in strengthening the elements that make the city a unique and wonderful place.

Community Character

- Enhance the quality of life of Maquoketa by identifying and enhancing the elements that give the community its sense of place and identity.
- Leverage the city's unique culture, historic elements, and contributions from artists for economic development, community marketing, and resident attraction and retention.

Population

- Establish a resident recruitment program focused on promoting Maquoketa, welcoming newcomers, and attracting people to live in the community.
- Encourage the creation of the housing needed to grow the city's population.

Arts and Entertainment

- Work with community organizations to provide festivals and events that bring the community together.
- Support community organizations that provide arts education and venues for artistic performances.
- Look for opportunities to expand the City's collection of public art.



Community History

- Safeguard Maquoketa's historic sites, buildings, and cultural resources.
- Rehabilitate existing buildings in a way that preserves their historic significance while allowing their use for modern purposes such as office space, retail, or housing.

Community Safety

- Ensure the fair, equitable, and uniform enforcement of rules, regulations, and laws.
- Use community activities, partnerships, and outreach to foster positive relationships, good citizenship, and cooperation with public safety efforts.
- Encourage community events like Spring Clean-Up Day that bring people together and build community pride.
- Focus resources on access to substance abuse and mental health services.
- Review ordinances to identify the department responsible for enforcement and adjust as needed to improve community safety.

Maqtoberfest Poster

Notes

1. See “Vital Statistics of Iowa Annual Report”
2. See “A Rural Brain Gain Migration”
3. See “Tax Incentives”
4. See “Jackson County Historical Society”
5. See Rezab.
6. See “Uniform Crime Reporting 2016”