

# **CITY OF AVOCA**



## **INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS STUDY AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

**REVISED FALL 2013**

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**City of Avoca**

**Resolution 14-0306-01**

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AN UPDATED INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS STUDY  
AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CITY OF AVOCA**

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Avoca, Iowa has committed to the development of an Infrastructure Needs Study and Strategic Plan for the City of Avoca; and,

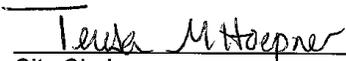
WHEREAS, the Avoca Strategic Planning Committee has participated in the formulation of the original plan, and;

WHEREAS, the City of Avoca, Iowa has committed to updating said plan on an as-needed basis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Avoca, Iowa, herewith adopts said plan, incorporating citizen comment and recommendations.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on this 6<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2014.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

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# **AVOCA INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS STUDY AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

Avoca, Iowa

2013

Prepared by:

Avoca Strategic Planning Committee,  
Western Iowa Development Association  
&  
Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

The Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA), along with Western Iowa Development Association (WIDA), prepared the Infrastructure Needs Study and Strategic Plan for Avoca, Iowa, with direction and assistance from Avoca City staff. Participation and cooperation to complete this project was provided by the following groups and persons:

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The Infrastructure Needs Study and Strategic Plan were funded in part through a grant provided by the Iowa West Foundation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
<b>I. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. Community Profile.....</b>	<b>2</b>
History .....	2
Government Structure .....	2
Population and Demographics .....	2
Land Use/Growth Plan.....	3
<b>III. Current Infrastructure and Public Facilities Inventory.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Water Supply/Storage/Distribution .....	4
Wastewater Collection and Treatment .....	4
Storm Water Collection System .....	4
Streets/Roads.....	4
Utilities.....	4
Public Buildings .....	4
<b>IV. Housing.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Overview .....	5
Condition of Existing Stock .....	5
<b>V. Economic Development.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VI. Beautification.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>VII. Recreation.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>VIII. Safety .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Emergency Services.....	12
Sidewalks and Pedestrian Safety.....	12
<b>IX. Prioritized Project List .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>X. Financial Analysis .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Revenues .....	14
Expenditures.....	14
Debt Service.....	16
Overall Budget Condition.....	17
<b>XI. Project Implementation Analysis .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>XII. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>19</b>

## I. Introduction

In recent years, many of Pottawattamie County's rural communities have experienced population growth and increased demand for housing as more people seek to move out of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area. New subdivisions are appearing in many of the communities and housing prices have grown rapidly. At the same time, population increases in these communities translate to increased demand for utilities, services, and facilities. This increased demand comes at a time when all cities in Iowa are faced with declining tax revenues and cuts in state funding. As a result, capital improvement projects are becoming increasingly more difficult to undertake, while community leaders continue their economic development efforts.

By completing this plan, Avoca officials will be able to maintain a close eye on the City's infrastructure and public facilities and properties, and perhaps be better prepared to address the City's needs. The first goal of this plan is to identify and prioritize needed improvements to existing infrastructure and public facilities and to determine the estimated costs to complete these projects. The second goal of this plan is to properly identify which projects the City can feasibly implement with and without outside assistance.

Cost estimates for each of the proposed projects were developed by an independent engineering firm. Using preliminary information, a price range for each project was developed for the committee. The estimates provided are intended to be used only for planning purposes, allowing the City the opportunity to organize financial resources for projects before they are to be implemented. Many of the projects will require detailed engineering and/or final design services prior to implementation, at which time the City will receive more detailed cost estimates for selected projects.

This document is intended to provide guidance to the community as future improvements to infrastructure and public facilities are planned and completed. Actual implementation of projects discussed in this plan will be the responsibility of the City Council, who will consider availability of local financial resources, eligibility for outside funding assistance, and community support for each project in determining when and how to implement selected projects.

## II. Community Profile

### History

A group of railroad officials and families observed the valley from a hill and one quoted Thomas Moore's poem "Meeting of the Waters" and the name Avoca was adopted. The original plot was made in 1869, when the railroad reached this point. The first business building was erected in 1869 along with the first religious service. In 1871, the first public school was built. The first graduation class had three graduates in 1886. The first fire department was organized in 1880 with 61 members and the first council meeting was held in 1873, when the town was incorporated. Milo Adams was the mayor. The Avoca Herald was started in 1880. The first financial institution was a privately owned bank started in 1872. This bank became the Avoca State Bank. In 1893 another bank was opened, which became the Citizen' Savings Bank in 1901. In 1885 the courthouse was built using a resident tax levy on land donated by the City. In 1890 the public water system was started and a year later the Harlan Avoca telephone system was installed. The beginning of the library was in 1898 with books donated by the Saturday Club. The American Legion sponsored the building of the largest pool in the state in 1924. The Avoca Nursing Home was opened in 1961 and is now named Care Initiatives. In 2003 construction was completed of a new nursing and retirement facility north of Interstate 80. The existing building was occupied by CI Direct, which employs over 80 customer services representatives and serves as an inbound call center.

### Government Structure

The City of Avoca is operated under a nonpartisan mayor/council form of government, with the mayor and five council members elected at-large by a popular vote. The mayor is the chief executive officer of the City. The mayor is elected for a two-year term and acts as presiding officer at all regular and special City Council meetings. The mayor is not a member of the council and cannot vote as a member of the council.

### Population and Demographics

The highest recorded population count in Avoca was 1,673 in 1930. Since then there have been fluctuations in the City's population. Generally, Avoca has maintained a population of approximately 1,500 people. The City's population grew 7.5 percent from 1990 to 2000, but the 2010 Census documented a decline of 104 residents; there were 1,506 residents in Avoca according to the latest census.

According to the 2010 Census, the median age for Avoca is 43.2 years. 48.9 percent of the population is male and 51.1 percent is female. 98.8 percent of the population is white.

Population			
	2000	2010	% Change
Avoca	1,610	1,506	-6.46%
Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities	8,788	9,117	3.74%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010

<b>Median Age</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	40.7	43.2	6.1%
<b>Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities*</b>	38.6	40.7	5.4%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010

\*A weighted average of the 12 communities

<b>Adjusted Median Household Income</b>			
	<b>2000*</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	\$50,431	\$50,250	-0.36%
<b>Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities°</b>	\$42,781	\$54,173	5.53%

U.S. Census Bureau

\*Inflation adjusted to 2010 buying power dollars

°A weighted average of the 12 communities

### **Land Use/Growth Plan**

The arrangement and location of future land uses should be determined before the basic services for Avoca, such as utilities, community facilities and streets can be planned. Land use classifies land according to the way an area is utilized – residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural or public. Establishing suitable areas of town in which certain types of land use are acceptable is one of the foundation principles of planning and also is primary to the development of efficient, safe and economically sound cities. Avoca does follow a land use plan which is intended to guide land use decisions and become the basis for land use regulation.

### III. Current Infrastructure and Public Facilities

#### Water Supply/Storage/Distribution

The City's water supply and distribution infrastructure are maintained by Regional Water, Inc., a rural water entity that has a large well field and water treatment facility north of Avoca. Regional Water and Avoca jointly constructed a 500,000-gallon water tower in 2002 that serves the City and adjoining rural areas. The City still owns and uses a 300,000-gallon water storage tank on the north edge of the community. However, the water used to fill that tower is provided by Regional Water. The City plans to finance installation of new water mains to serve the area around the A-H-S-T school complex in the southern part of town. This project will loop several dead-end mains in the area, improving water pressure, water quality, and fire protection. There are currently 661 residential and 104 non-residential water customers in Avoca.

#### Wastewater Collection and Treatment

Avoca's wastewater treatment system is a primary type, three-cell lagoon, and 97 percent of the City is served by this treatment system. The average load for the system is 193,000 gallons per day, with a design capacity of 255,000 gallons per day. The sewer system serves 645 residential customers and 96 non-residential customers.

#### Storm Water Collection System

The City has the only stormwater utility in Pottawattamie County. Storm water infrastructure, including curb and gutter on streets, is being added as new streets are constructed. The stormwater utility serves 763 residential customers and 118 nonresidential customers.

#### Streets/Roads

Over 95 percent of Avoca's streets are hard surfaced, including U.S. Highway 59, which runs north/south through town. Several streets have been identified for re-surfacing, and the City would like to complete a streetscape/beautification project along Elm Street in the near future.

#### Utilities

Electric	MidAmerican Energy Company (Private)
Natural Gas	MidAmerican Energy Company (Private)
Telephone	Iowa Telecom
Cable TV	AT&T and Walnut Telecommunications
Solid Waste	R&S Waste Disposal (Residential)

#### Public Buildings

	Facility	Location	Condition	Issues
1	Avoca City Hall	201 N. Elm Street	Fair	Expansion needed for operations
2	Post Office	401 N. Elm Street	Fair	None
3	Public Library	213 N. Elm Street	Good	None
4	Avoca Courthouse	209 N. Elm Street	Fair	None
5	Public Works Shed	262 S. Chestnut Street	Good	None
6	Golf Course Clubhouse	1701 N. Willow Street	Good	None
7	AHST School District	768 S. Maple Street	Good	Remodel of Secondary Portion Needed

The City's fire station, municipal offices, and the community room are located at Avoca City Hall. The City does own the Avoca Courthouse and leases it to Pottawattamie County.

## IV. Housing

### Overview

Most currently, there are 704 homes in Avoca according to the U.S. Census – American Community Survey’s 5-year estimates (2007-2011). Approximately 46 percent of those homes were built prior to 1940 and 8 percent were built since 2000. Generally, housing development in Avoca has grown at a steady pace.

The majority of homes in Avoca, 44.5 percent, are valued between \$50,000 and \$100,000 according to the American Community Survey. There are 49 houses in Avoca valued between \$200,000 and \$500,000; three homes have value of at least \$500,000 or over. The City does have a larger number of higher-end homes for a community of Avoca’s size. In 2000, the median value of a single-family dwelling was \$92,439. Housing values did increase in the next ten years to \$93,100, a slight increase of 0.72 percent.

<b>Number of Owner Occupied Homes</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	513	490	-4.69%
<b>Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities</b>	2,749	2,869	4.18%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010

<b>Adjusted Median Housing Value</b>			
	<b>2000*</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	\$92,439	\$93,100	0.72%
<b>Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities<sup>o</sup></b>	\$104,592	\$112,671	7.72%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010

\*Inflation adjusted to 2010 buying power dollars

<sup>o</sup>A weighted average of the 12 communities

### Condition of Existing Stock

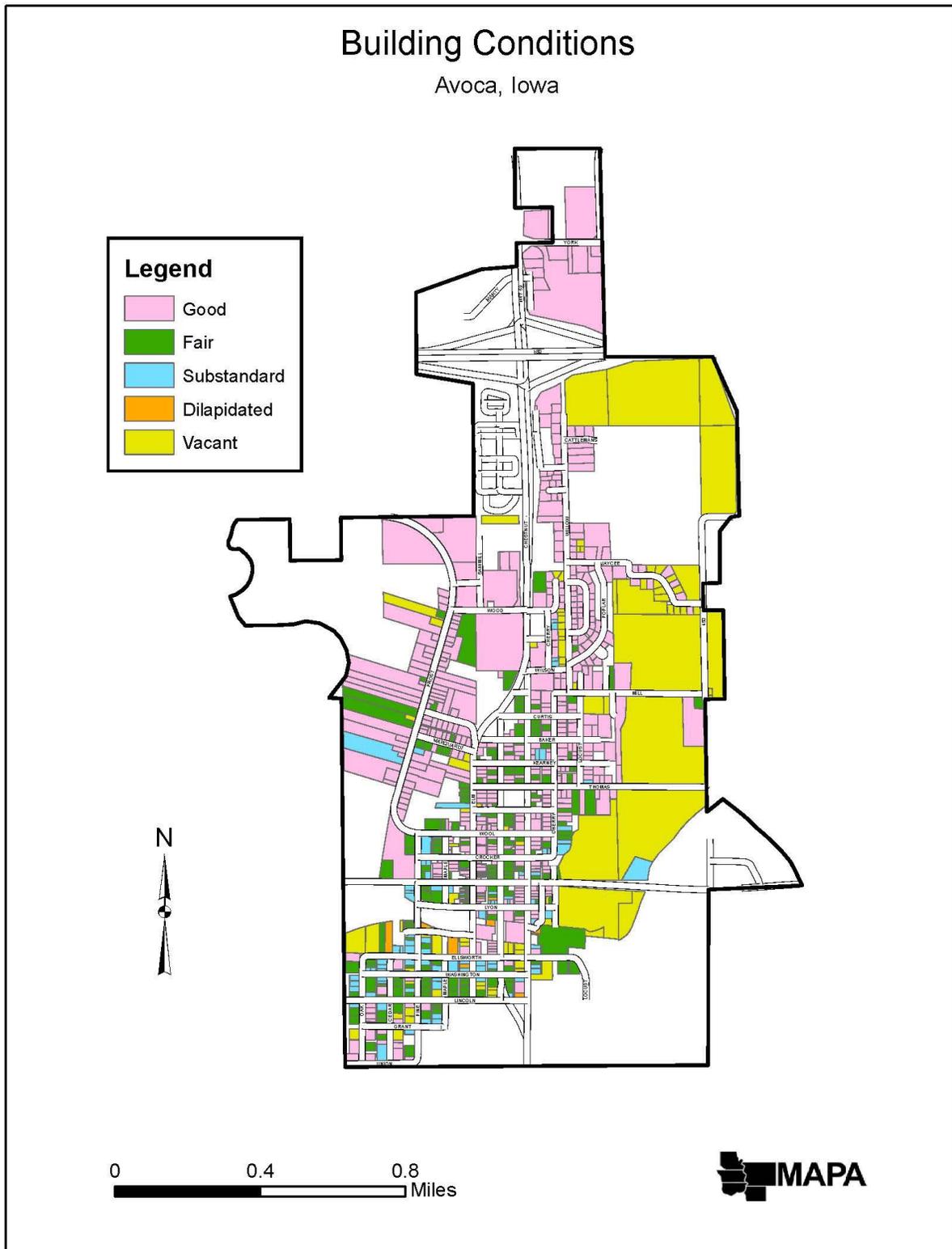
The availability of quality housing stock at an affordable price is an important issue for economic development and growth of a community. One major consideration is evaluating whether there is sufficient housing for workers. Dilapidated properties cause concern for neighbors, neighborhoods and the overall presentation of the community. Such properties can affect health and safety while other site issues can decrease adjacent property values.

A building conditions inventory was completed by MAPA (third party windshield survey based on the Assessment Legend on the proceeding page) as part of this plan update. The intention was to identify if building conditions are a concern for the City and what, if any, steps can be taken to improve those structures. Only the main structure was considered when determining the condition of each parcel. Vacant sites were also noted as they are important for managing growth and utilizing existing infrastructure.

## Assessment Legend

Condition	Description
1 = Good	No obvious work needed.
2 = Minor Repairs Needed	Obvious problems with paint, broken steps, handrails, screens, gutters and downspouts or conditions of sidewalks within the property.
3 = Major Repairs Needed	In need of roofing, window repair or replacement; chimney leaning or crumbling; other serious signs of deterioration.
4 = Dilapidated	Imminent danger of collapse; major health and safety concerns.
5 = Vacant	Empty Lot

Using the Assessment Tool, the following building conditions map was created:



## V. Economic Development

Avoca plays an important role in the area economy of East Pottawattamie County by virtue its service and retail businesses. The service and retail business community in Avoca is comprised of core retail such as the local pharmacy, general store, building materials and grocery store and core services such as health, beauty, legal, financial, auto, and insurance services.

Another important area of the local economy in Avoca is farm related businesses. Avoca offers a veterinarian clinic, two implement dealerships and related services, a small engine dealership, two seed and chemical businesses, and grain storage.

A third important aspect of the local economy is services related to Interstate-80. Avoca has a travel center, four hotel/motel facilities, two gas stations, and two trucking firms located in the community.

Finally, Avoca is home to excellent public services. A regional school district is located in Avoca. MidAmerican Energy, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and limited County services are situated in Avoca. The United States Post Office is also located in the downtown area. The City of Avoca also provides a full complement of recreational opportunities and other essential infrastructure to the public.

Improving the Elm Street Town Center has been an economic development priority for the community. Avoca Main Street, Inc. has recently been accepted into the Iowa Main Street program and is actively attempting to build a Main Street program in Avoca.

Expanded retail opportunities have resulted in an increase in sales tax revenues being generated in the community. Many key indicators of retail performance in Avoca have demonstrated positive growth in recent years, and the City is starting to see some benefits from that growth in the form of increased sales tax revenues and an expanded tax base.

<b>Adjusted Retail Sales per Capita</b>			
	<b>Adjusted Annual Retail Sales per Capita (FY 2002- 2006 Average)*</b>	<b>Adjusted Annual Retail Sales per Capita (FY 2007- 2011 Average)*</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	\$12,932	\$14,908	15.28%

Iowa State Community Indicators Program – Retail Analysis, FY 2002-2011

\*Inflation adjusted to FY 2011 buying power dollars

Note: A total could not be calculated for all C.I.T.I.E.S. communities due to lack of data for some towns.

<b>Adjusted Retail Sales per Firm</b>			
	<b>Adjusted Annual Retail Sales per Capita (FY 2002- 2006 Average)*</b>	<b>Adjusted Annual Retail Sales per Capita (FY 2007- 2011 Average)*</b>	<b>% Change</b>

<b>Avoca</b>	\$292,242	\$314,047	7.46%
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Iowa State Community Indicators Program – Retail Analysis, FY 2002-2011

\*Inflation adjusted to FY 2011 buying power dollars

Note: A total could not be calculated for all C.I.T.I.E.S. communities due to lack of data for some towns.

<b>Number of Employed Individuals</b>			
	<b>Number Employed (2000)</b>	<b>Number Employed (2010)</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	809	816	0.87%
<b>Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities</b>	4,655	5,025	7.95%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010

<b>Poverty and Unemployment</b>		
	<b>Poverty Rate (2010)</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate (2010)</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	10.3%	4.1%
<b>Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities*</b>	8.5%	3.7%

U.S. Census Bureau

\*A weighted average of the 12 communities

## **VI. Beautification**

Beautification is the process of making visual improvements to a community. This can include all areas of the community such as entry ways, main corridors, and main streets, while including various methods such as planting trees (or other greenery) or improving streetlights, pavement and facades. The overall feel is intended to create a sense of place while boosting community pride, tourism and commerce.

## **VII. Recreation**

The primary park in Avoca is Edgington Park, located near the East Branch of the West Nishnabotna River, on the east side of town. The park offers a variety of recreational opportunities to its users including: a soccer field, two ball fields, the Avoca Aquatic Center, a walking trail, a batting cage, a sand volleyball court, a basketball court, six shelters, and playground equipment. The shelters have picnic tables and grills. Significant improvements to the park in the last decade have increased use of the facilities by residents and visitors alike.

Additionally, the City owns and operates the Avoca Municipal Golf Course, a challenging nine-hole golf course that is open to the public and attracts golfers from throughout the region. The course is very well-maintained and has been supported over the years by a strong membership.

Avoca is partnering with the A-H-S-T School District to assist in the construction of athletic fields in conjunction with the school's forthcoming facilities expansion. The City's investment in the project will allow for access to the fields for community-based youth recreation activities. The school is also seeking grants and private support to construct a separate weight room and fitness facility as part of the school expansion. While the City would not be responsible for operation or maintenance of the facility, it is anticipated that citizens and/or school district patrons would have the opportunity to use the facility, in addition to district students.

## **VIII. Safety**

### **Emergency Services**

The City of Avoca's fire protection service is provided by a community based volunteer fire and rescue department. Upon need, neighboring township and community departments will assist. The City's emergency response capabilities by number of personnel and equipment are as follows:

- 21 firefighters; 9 rescue unit personnel
- 7 rescue/response vehicles
- 3 tornado siren(s)

Avoca's tornado siren(s) and E-911 communications are now connected to the county-wide system which are organized and operated by Pottawattamie County Communications/911.

There is no designate shelter in the City of Avoca.

### **Sidewalks and Pedestrian Safety**

The City completed a sidewalk study in 2003, which revealed the need to install, repair, and/or replace sidewalks in several locations in Avoca. Specifically, the City is preparing to start installing new sidewalks in public areas through the Iowa Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program.

## **IX. Prioritized Project List**

Based on the present condition of infrastructure in the community, the strategic planning committee identified the following projects for implementation. The projects are prioritized into short-, medium-, and long-range projects, with the short- and medium-range projects ranked by the committee in order of importance.

1. Top Priority by Category:
  - a. FY 2015 Street Project:
  - b. Housing Programs Phase I
  - c. Downtown Development Continued Programs
  - d. Trail Plan Phase II
  - e. Edgington Memorial Park Master Plan Phase I
  - f. Public Safety Center
2. FY 2016 Street Project
3. Buttermilk Flat Park Master Plan:

### **Medium-Range Projects (implementation in 2-5 years):**

4. Housing Programs Phase II
5. FY 2017 Street Project
6. Trail Plan Phase III-V
7. Edgington Memorial Park Master Plan Phase II-V.
8. FY 2018 Street Project
9. FY 2019 Buttermilk Flat Neighborhood Project
10. Buttermilk Flat Park Master Plan

### **Long-Range Projects (implementation in more than 5 years):**

11. Hwy 59 Streetscape
12. Western Sector Water Project
13. Eastern Sector Water Project
14. Lagoon Capacity Project

## X. Financial Analysis

### Revenues

For the current fiscal year FY 2014, revenues collected by the City of Avoca will total \$5,928,937. Based on Avoca's total taxable value of \$56,799,564, the City expects to receive \$407,014 from taxes levied on property. This total includes special revenue levies of 3.8960 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation, used to support emergency operations and employee benefits in the community. The City's regular general levy rate is 8.10000 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation on regular property, the maximum levy allowed by Iowa law. Property tax revenues support general expenditures and capital projects in the community.

Fee-based revenues, including those collected by the City for water, sewer, and garbage services, are expected to total over \$744,459. These revenues are used primarily to fund operation and maintenance of the City's water and sewer systems and to pay for garbage collection, with a small percentage of funds placed in reserve for future utility improvements.

The City also owns and operates the Avoca Municipal Golf Course and the Avoca Aquatic Center. Together, these facilities will generate an estimated \$420,000 during the current fiscal year. These revenues are used to staff, operate, and maintain the golf course and aquatic center, and fees are re-evaluated by the City on an annual basis depending on the need for improvements and revenue projections. While these activities are largely self-supporting, the City does realize the regional draw of both facilities by out-of-town users and their economic development benefits, and therefore supports both endeavors to a small degree with general funds budgeted for culture and recreation.

Other significant revenue sources for the City include Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) funds and Road Use Tax (RUT) funds. The City expects to receive approximately \$191,520 in LOST revenues in FY 2014 and approximately \$146,567 in RUT funds. RUT funds are used for maintenance and improvements to streets and right-of-way properties in the community, and LOST revenues are used to support various infrastructure projects and to provide property tax relief to residents and businesses.

The establishment of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts in the community will provide approximately \$905,000 during the current fiscal year. These revenues are used to finance installation of infrastructure within the TIF districts. Various local taxes, fees for services, franchise agreements, and receipt of grants and donations for projects from outside sources comprise the remainder of the City's revenues.

### Expenditures

For the current fiscal year, expenditures incurred by the City of Avoca will total \$6,763,438. Those expenditures are broken down into seven main categories, listed in the table below:

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>Activities/Services Included</b>	<b>FY 2014 Cost</b>
Public Safety	Law Enforcement; Fire; Ambulance	\$333,554
Public Works	Street Repair & Maintenance; Lighting	\$576,031
Culture & Recreation	Parks; Library; Swimming Pool; Golf Course	\$764,776
General Government	Staff and Elected Official Salaries; Elections; City Hall	\$316,004
Community Development	Urban Renewal, Economic Development, Housing	\$826,820
Business/Enterprises; Utilities	Municipal Utilities	\$243,396
Debt Service	Principal and Interest on Long-Term Debt	\$753,660

<b>Property Tax Levy*</b>			
	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	14.33	14.57	1.67%

Iowa Department of Management

\*Dollar amount levied per \$1,000 of assessed value

<b>City Revenue</b>			
	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	\$2,569,769	\$6,344,441	146.89%
<b>Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities</b>	\$16,520,906	\$18,507,032	12.02%

Iowa Department of Management

Note: FY 2011 is the most current year city revenue data are available

<b>Obligated City Debt</b>			
	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Avoca</b>	\$228,613	\$561,006	145.40%
<b>Total C.I.T.I.E.S. Communities</b>	\$1,129,890	\$1,485,282	31.45%

Iowa Department of Management

### **Debt Service**

Avoca has a relatively small amount of debt. Most of the City's debt is related to urban renewal projects which utilize TIF to repay bonds. These urban renewal projects have allowed the City to greatly expand its property tax base.

The City is expected to take on additional debt over the next several years. The new debt will also be used to finance long-term investments which will keep the community vital for the next generation. These projects include the Elm Street Streetscape and Infrastructure Project, Wastewater Treatment and Collection Action Plan, and a Stormwater Infrastructure Action Plan.

The current outstanding obligations of the City are describe in detail in the tables below.

Avoca Debt Details FY 2015		FY 2015 Outstanding	Year 2015	Year 2015	Year 2015	Remaining
	Security	Principal	Principal Payment	Interest Payment	Fees	Principal Balance
<b>2009 Series Bond</b>	G.O.	\$870,000	\$70,000	\$36,035	\$400	\$800,000
<b>2012 US Bank - Gen/OB</b>	G.O.	\$357,145	\$71,429	\$10,530	\$0	\$285,716
<b>Midstates Revolving Loan</b>	G.O.	\$865,000	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$865,000
<b>2012 Midstates - Ambulance</b>	G.O.	\$105,000	\$35,000	\$4,866	\$0	\$70,000
<b>2013 Sewer Project</b>	Revenue	\$1,642,932	\$70,000	\$40,000	\$0	\$1,572,932
<b>2011 Storm Water</b>	Revenue	\$347,901	\$17,260	\$10,435	\$0	\$330,642
<b>Water Rev Bond</b>	Revenue	\$350,000	\$65,000	\$12,220	\$400	\$285,000
<b>2012 US Bank - Spec Assess</b>	Revenue	\$112,500	\$18,750	\$3,577	\$0	\$93,750
<b>2014 Midstates Bank - Spec Assess</b>	Revenue	\$155,000	\$22,500	\$4,500	\$0	\$132,500
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$4,805,478</b>	<b>\$369,939</b>	<b>\$137,163</b>	<b>\$800</b>	<b>\$4,435,540</b>
<b>Total G.O.</b>		<b>\$2,197,145</b>	<b>\$176,429</b>	<b>\$66,431</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>\$2,020,716</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>\$2,608,333</b>	<b>\$193,510</b>	<b>\$70,732</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>\$2,414,824</b>

### **Overall Budget Condition**

Relative to many small Iowa communities, the City of Avoca's finances are strong. The City's property tax base is large enough to support many of the essential functions of the local government. In addition to the property tax base, the City has diversified revenue streams, such as Local Option Tax and Hotel/Motel Tax which allow the City to finance many improvements and investments.

While many communities do not utilize TIF to its fullest potential, Avoca has been able to use this financing to provide infrastructure for several new development projects in recent years. Continued use of TIF for new development and accumulation of reserves for improvements to existing infrastructure should create enough budgetary flexibility for the City to complete many of the improvement projects that have been identified. However, without outside assistance, some of the projects may not be financially feasible within the timeframes identified by the City.

The City has engaged in long-term improvement planning and developed a long-term budget picture. If outside resources are sought and leveraged with local investment, the City should be able to fund the entire list of identified needs. The City Council and Mayor will need to govern Avoca wisely and adhere to the planning documents in order for this to happen, but it is well within the realm of possibility with proper governance.

## **XI. Project Implementation Analysis**

The purpose of this section is to discuss estimated costs of selected projects, potential sources of funding for those projects, and local financial requirements for project implementation. Cost estimates were developed using input from professional engineers and architects wherever possible, and are based on very basic opinions of cost and feasibility.

### **Immediate/Short-Range Projects (implementation in less than 24 months):**

#### 15. Top Priority by Category:

- a. FY 2015 Street Project: Complete replacement and drainage installation of Pine Street from Lincoln Street to Grant Street. Complete replacement and drainage installation of Lincoln Street from Pine Street to Maple Street. Complete replacement and drainage installation of Kearney Street from Hwy 59 to Chestnut Street. Complete replacement and drainage installation of Baker Street from Hwy 59 to Cherry Street. Curb and Gutter replacement and drainage installation along Chestnut Street from Hwy 83 to Wilson Street.
- b. Housing Projects (Partnering with the Avoca Betterment Association)
  - i. Dilapidated Housing Acquisition- Acquisition and demolition or rehabilitation of dilapidated houses.
  - ii. New Construction Program- 15% grant per unit for newly constructed owner-occupied or rental housing; credit is available to developer or buyer.
  - iii. Homeownership Program- Partial forgivable loan and second mortgage program to help home buyers.
  - iv. Rehabilitation Program- 10% grant and \$15,000 no-interest loan to help home rehabilitation.
- c. Downtown Development
  - i. Downtown Improvement Grants (Façade Program, 80% complete): 80% of costs associated with projects conforming to the Downtown Master Plan.
  - ii. Small Business Retention/Start-up/Expansion Grants: \$5,000 grant for small business start-up/retention/expansion.
- d. Trail Plan: Pedestrian Bridge and approximately 2.5 miles of trail will be completed by the end of 2014. Another 7 miles of trails, in approximately 10 more segments, are left to be constructed.
- e. Edgington Memorial Park Master Plan: Electrical system improvements. Basketball court resurfacing. Dog area construction. Aquatic center water feature improvements.
- f. Public Safety Center: New facility for the joint public safety department (animal control, paramedic, police, and fire).

16. FY 2016 Street Project. Complete reconstruction and drainage improvements of Crocker Street from Chestnut Street to Cherry Street and Cherry Street from Crocker Street to Thomas Street. Complete reconstruction and drainage improvements of Locust Street from Baker Street to Thomas Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Ellsworth Street from Chestnut Street to the end of the roadway two blocks east. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Kearney Street from Locust Street to the end of the roadway one block east.
17. Buttermilk Flat Park Master Plan: Fine grading and seeding.

**Medium-Range Projects (implementation in 2-5 years):**

18. Housing Projects (Partnering with the Avoca Betterment Association)
  - a. Dilapidated Housing Acquisition- Acquisition and demolition or rehabilitation of dilapidated houses.
  - b. New Construction Program- 15% grant per unit for newly constructed owner-occupied or rental housing; credit is available to developer or buyer.
  - c. Homeownership Program- Partial forgivable loan and second mortgage program to help home buyers.
  - d. Rehabilitation Program- 10% grant and \$15,000 no-interest loan to help home rehabilitation.
19. FY 2017 Street Project: Complete reconstruction and drainage improvements of Wood Street from Hwy 59 to Cherry Street and Cherry Street from Wood Street to Wilson Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Willow Street to Mill Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Mill Street from Cherry Street to Birch Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Cherry Street from Baker Street to Mill Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Locust Street from Baker Street to Mill Street.
20. Trail Plan: 7 miles of trails, in approximately 10 more segments will be constructed.
21. Edgington Memorial Park Master Plan: 9-hole disc golf course. Enhanced parking areas. Splash pad construction.
22. FY 2018 Street Project: Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Ellsworth Street from Oak Street to Chestnut Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Washington Street from Oak Street to Chestnut Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Lincoln Street from Oak Street to Pine Street and from Hwy 59 to Chestnut St. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Grant Street from Oak Street to Pine Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Oak Street from Ellsworth Street to Union Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Cedar Street from Ellsworth Street to Union Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Maple Street from Ellsworth Street to Lincoln Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Chestnut Street from Ellsworth Street to Hwy 59. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Crocker Street from Pine Street to Elm Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Lyon Street from

Chestnut Street to Cherry Street. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvements of Curtis Street from Cherry Street to Locust Street.

23. FY 2019 Buttermilk Flat Neighborhood Project for replacement of street, drainage, and water infrastructure along all of Frost Ave, Marquadt Street, and Jack Frost Street.
24. Buttermilk Flat Park Master Plan: Community garden program. Basketball court construction.

**Long-Range Projects (implementation in more than 5 years):**

25. Hwy 59 Streetscape: Enhancement program from Interstate-80 to southern city limit. Landscaping and ornamental lighting. Trail standard walking path and pedestrian tunnel. Signage.
26. Western Sector Water Project: The area west of Chestnut Street, north of the RR ROW and south of Wood Street. There is a total of 22,100 LF of water main in this area. There are 54 total fire hydrants in this area and an estimated 70 valves. For estimating purposes, there are 300 service connections in the western sector.
27. Eastern Sector Water Project: The area east of Chestnut Street, north of the RR ROW and south of Wood Street. There is a total of 21,240 LF of gravity fed water main in this area; 2,320 LF of 2", or smaller; 6,300 LF of 4", 8,850 LF of 6" and 3,770 LF of 8" main. There are 29 total fire hydrants in this area and an estimated 32 valves. For estimating purposes, there are 200 service connections in the eastern sector.
28. Lagoon Capacity Project: Conversion of three-cell stabilization lagoons to an aerated system. Cells 2 and 3 would be modified and the other cell would be quiescent.

Due to constantly changing cost factors for infrastructure projects and the potential for long-range projects to change in scope over time, cost estimates are not currently included for these projects. While the City currently does not anticipate completion of these projects within five years, there are various factors that may require a re-evaluation of the priority for these projects. Prior to implementation of any of the projects listed, the City should consult with professionals as needed to develop detailed cost estimates and project specifications.

## **XII. Conclusion**

Due to recent activities in and around Avoca by local leaders and developers, the City finds itself in the midst of a critical point in its history, with some tremendous opportunities and some significant challenges. Developers have taken advantage of the City's location along the interstate, resulting in additions to the City's retail sector and creating numerous jobs in the community. These new business ventures have stabilized the community's sales tax base at a time when many neighboring communities are losing sales tax revenues to adjacent, larger communities. Additionally, major economic development projects in neighboring communities will afford opportunities for supporting businesses and new families to come to Avoca, and the City must be prepared to capitalize on such opportunities while pursuing economic development within jurisdictional limits. Recent upgrades to the water system and several streets and roads in Avoca have increased capacity for the City to provide essential services to previously undeveloped areas and will allow the City to accommodate new residents and businesses.

The development of the Nishna Ridge subdivision and other surrounding residential areas has made housing stock available to new prospective residents. Housing prices are relatively affordable in Avoca, and in spite of a "tight" housing market, there are usually homes available for purchase in a variety of prices and sizes. Avoca has a wealth of quality recreational opportunities for visitors and residents alike, and City leaders seem to be actively involved in working to continue to improve the community.

Avoca is also faced with some significant challenges to growth and sustainability. Its distance from the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area poses a relative disadvantage when it comes to attracting residents who commute to the metro for work. In addition, Avoca residents are tax payers to the A-H-S-T School District. With the recent passage of a school bond issue and forthcoming school construction project, citizens have committed to providing financial support to the district, and as a result, the City may encounter resistance in attempting to complete major infrastructure improvement projects concurrently. Even considerations of rate increases for utilities or fee-based services may be difficult to undertake if taxpayers are being asked to shoulder an increased burden from other entities.

Avoca's growth is also limited somewhat by the community's geography. With significant amounts of land in the southern and western portions of the City located in the floodplain, and with two branches of the Nishnabotna River meeting just south of town, Avoca finds itself limited in terms of where it can grow. While the City has annexed land north of Interstate 80 in recent years, even the presence of that road places some limitations on what types of growth can occur. To this end, City leaders should take steps to ensure that current and future land use practices are undertaken with the long-term interests of the community in mind. Re-development of Avoca's Central Business District, and policies encouraging residents to make improvements to existing buildings and in-fill lots could be critical in the long run as the availability of sites for new development decreases.

While the City does have some remaining borrowing capacity, the scope and cost of projects identified for completion in the coming years will require significant local investment in relatively short periods of time, in addition to any outside financial assistance that may be available. With a total bonding capacity just over \$4.2 million and the need to preserve some flexibility for any emergencies or other long-term opportunities that may arise, it will be critical for City leaders and staff to be aware of all financial and technical resources made available.

While this plan is one such resource, Avoca will find that as projects are completed and conditions change, the City's needs may change as well. In order to maximize the usefulness of this plan, it will be necessary to re-evaluate the document as projects are completed and local resources are obligated or become available. At a minimum, the plan should be updated within five years to reflect the City's accomplishments and to identify any new challenges that may arise.