



Hamilton County Growth Partnership Strategic Plan (2025 – 2028)

Purpose: The Hamilton County Growth Partnership was established to serve as the point of leadership and connection for business, industry, education, and government leaders in Hamilton County, Iowa. The purpose of this connection is to accomplish needed actions to grow the economy, increase housing availability, and increase the quality of life throughout the County.

Mission:

The Hamilton County Growth Partnership (HCGP) exists to grow the economy and population of Hamilton County, Iowa. This work is accomplished by supporting existing business, recruiting additional business, increasing housing availability, supporting community development, undertaking workforce attraction efforts, coordinating government relations, and supporting quality of life initiatives.

Strategic Initiative #1: Business, Retention, and Expansion

Action Item #1: Conduct 100% of targeted existing industry visits annually to assess needs and opportunities for expansion and provide stakeholders with a yearly BRE report.

Action Item #2: Actively pursue external funding in support of further investment and expansion from existing industries.

Action Item #3: Organize annual recognition event saluting the value of our key employers to local area.

Action Item #4: Host/sponsor two events a year to promote small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Strategic Initiative #2: Business Development and Attraction

Action Item #5: Support commercial/industrial site development efforts in Hamilton County including site certification of acres.

Action Item #6: Support retail attraction/recruitment to targeted properties across Hamilton County by working with communities to develop grant programs, Smart Start programs, referral programs, and listing available spaces on LOIS and the HCGP website.

Action Item #7: Attempt to secure land through option contracts to expand commercial and industrial development across Hamilton County.

Action Item #8: Unveil marketing plan for certified site (Q4 2025).

Strategic Initiative #3: Housing

Action Item #9: Support the rollout of the 2025 Hamilton County Housing Needs Assessment to all communities by disaggregating study results (by community) and engaging city councils.

Action Item #10: In conjunction with municipalities, establish and track housing targets for through 2028.

Action Item #11: Support existing housing projects underway to completion.

Action Item #12: Sponsor and host a county-wide housing summit.

Action Item #13: Actively recruit developers to visit and engage with communities.

Action Item #14: Promote Workforce Housing Tax Credit opportunities and assist with applications in Hamilton County.

Strategic Initiative #4: Community Development

Action Item #15: Support childcare expansion in the region.

Action Item #16: Provide outreach to Hamilton County communities, offering economic and community development assistance and support for local projects.

- Identify sources of external funding through private, local, state, and federal grants).
- Introduce strategic resources (ie. local and state organizations/agencies)
- Facilitate key partnerships with public, private, and non-profit entities.

Action Item #17: Partner in promoting public health and safety.

Strategic Initiative #5: Workforce Attraction & Development (May, 2026)

Action Item #18: Inclusion of Hamilton County into the Ames Regional Economic Alliance workforce attraction/retention programs or development of internal programs through Iowa Central Community College

Action Item #19: Social media marketing of Hamilton County workforce/workplaces, featuring opportunities in the region.

Action Item #20: Collaborate with the Ames Regional Economic Alliance to promote job opportunities in Hamilton County through their job board.

Action Item #21: Support and encourage business-school partnerships that create pathways for workforce development.

Strategic Initiative # 6: Organization Administration

Action Item #22: Continue efforts to expand the investor base and diversify revenue for HCGP, focusing on building long-term financial sustainability for the organization.

Action Item #23: Explore all the services Ames Regional Alliance can provide to assist with this plan.

Action Item #24: Coordinate with existing community and economic development efforts for a strong and united communication plan that encourages growth of workforce and more.

Action Item #25: Launch robust website and social media content for the Hamilton County Growth Partnership.

Action Item #26: Create and share an investor newsletter to HCGP stakeholders.

Strategic Initiative #7: Government Relations

Action Item #27: Foster collaborative relationships with elected officials and their staffs at the local, state and federal levels.

Action Item #28: In partnership with municipalities, business, and industry, host elected officials to address local needs and showcase the strengths of the region.

Action Item #29: Advocate for Hamilton County and rural issues with state and federal officials.

Action Item #30: Host a legislative forum featuring State of Iowa representatives of Hamilton County.

Strategic Initiative #8: Quality of Life / Economic Priorities

The purpose of this strategic initiative is to recognize existing and points of opportunity in the community and articulate HCGP's willingness to support or advocate the following:

1. **Downtown Redevelopment Countywide:** It is recognized there are numerous and costly undertakings currently at work to redevelop main streets across the County. The

Partnership recognizes and values this work as necessary to present the County as a stable place for development, offer amenities desired by potential residents, and resolve structurally dilapidated properties. HCGP is committed to partnering with all communities to creatively resolve issues present in downtown areas.

2. **K-12 Education:** Hamilton County is well served by three K-12 public school districts and one parochial private school. Investment in education is critical for future economic development efforts and investment in K-12 public education will be necessary to recruit additional employers and residents to the region.
3. **Recreational Amenities:** It is recognized by the partnership there are limited outdoor and indoor facilities to host recreational programs, trainings, and events. In addition, surrounding communities in the region are investing in facilities for youth and adults to participate in sporting programs. The partnership recognizes these facilities are necessary to remain an economically competitive community for recruiting families to the region and supporting health and wellness goals of the community.
4. **Maximize investment in the Highway 20 and Highway 17 Interchange Commercial and Industrial Corridor:** At least two properties within the boundary of commercial activity near this interchange remain vacant or underutilized. Specifically, the properties at 2307 Superior (Formerly K-mart) and 407 Close Drive (Formerly Doc's Stop) are currently vacant. Efforts will be undertaken to recruit redevelopment and reuse of these properties to maximize commercial development in the area and resolve the problem of vacant buildings in prominent traffic locations of the community.
5. **Community Redevelopment and Housing:** Several communities in Hamilton County are experiencing the impact of vacant, abandoned, or structurally unsafe residential or commercial structures. Efforts will be made to partner with communities to resolve the impact of dilapidated or abandoned structures to protect existing property values and redevelop lots to address a portion of the housing shortage in the County.
6. **Promote Transportation Access:** Hamilton County is well served by several underdeveloped interstate and highway exits along I-35 and Highway 20. Consideration will be given to promoting development with access to regional and national transportation networks.
7. **Ag-Economy:** Agriculture is the major contributor to the economy of Hamilton County. Understanding the impacts of the Agricultural economy for the County and supporting businesses that enhance opportunities to grow the Agricultural economy should be explored.