

2020 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Prepared by SICOG Staff

SOUTHERN IOWA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS 101 E Montgomery Street, Creston IA 50801



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document is split into five primary sections, an introduction, summary background, SWOT analysis, a strategic direction/action plan, and an evaluation framework. A short overview of each section is given in this executive summary.

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the purpose of the CEDS, which is to formulate a comprehensive regional economic strategic plan using the input of public and private stakeholders. This is followed by a description of the structure of the Southern Iowa Council of Governments and description of the structure of the CEDS Strategy Committee and the SICOG Executive Board. This section can be found from page 8 to 16.

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

This section provides an overview of the region regarding the natural and built-environment, demographics, workforce, educational attainment, industrial-mix, wages and income, housing, land values, and opportunity zones. The region is bordered on two sides by interstates and holds two Amtrak stations. The natural resources of the region are primarily related to agriculture and outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, and recreational trails. The primarily rural region only has two towns with populations over 5,000 according to the 2010 Decennial Census (Creston and Winterset). A third, Osceola, is expected to be marked above 5,000 in the 2020 Decennial Census. The racial make-up, unemployment rate, and labor force participation rates are all similar to the State of Iowa overall. However, due to the small regional population (around 70,000), quality job opportunities are often scarce, resulting in around 42 percent of residents living in the SICOG region but working elsewhere. Residents of the SICOG region are about eight percent less likely to have a post-secondary degree of any kind. This results in an industry with a higher concentration of industries that do not require post-secondary skill sets. Due to these lower skill requirements, the wages and household incomes are lower than the State of Iowa, on average. Land and housing stock values are also much lower than the state wide average. The housing stock is also much older than the state in most counties. However, the low wealth in the region has allowed four counties to gain the Opportunity Zone status. This section can be found from page 17 to 43.

SWOT ANALYSIS

This section provides a summary and analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the region as well as the perception of those factors. It is followed by a summary of the regional stakeholders' priorities. The SWOT/priorities survey included around 70 regional stakeholders, including representatives from cities, counties, economic development groups, and private firms. The strengths of the region are identified as quality of life, safety, natural resources, and the geographic location. Regional weaknesses include

the age of housing, lack of infrastructure funding, aging residents/declining population, and the geographic location. Opportunities in the region include the educational and training facilities, natural resource tourism, and multi-modal shipping. The biggest threats to the region are a lack of retail/entertainment centers, brain drain, tax laws, and the decreasing quality of the regional housing stock. Regional priorities, in order, are Economic Development, Housing, Transportation, Local Planning & Management, and Recreation and Comprehensive Planning. Recreation and Comprehensive Planning, tied for fifth priority. This section can be found from page 44 to 54.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/ACTION PLAN

This section describes and lists the goals and objectives that have been created to fulfill the purpose and intent of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The following are the goals of the 2020 SICOG CEDS:

- Improve and maintain the quality of life for residents the region
- Improve economic resilience
- Promote regional collaboration
- Improve environmental resilience

These goals are then broken into individual sections with objectives for each goal and actions for each objective. Each action has a corresponding schedule and a list of partners(s). This section can be found from page 55 to 76.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This section describes the way in which SICOG will measure the progress made towards fulfilling the goals of the 2020 SICOG CEDS. This includes a list of general statistics, SICOG-specific statistics, and tools or resources to possibly be utilized to measure progress. General statistics include demographics, income, housing, and wealth statistics. SICOG-specific statistics include the number of projects utilizing the benefits of Opportunity Zones, the number of housing projects in progress or completed, the number of comprehensive plans in progress or completed, and others. Tools and sources that will be utilized include the US Census Bureau, the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, an annual SICOG survey, and others. This section can be found on page 77 to 79.

INTRODUCTION



PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The development of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) contributes to effective economic development in the Southern Iowa Regional Council of Governments (SICOG) region through a locally based, regionally driven economic development planning process. This process serves as a means to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector, and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration. This CEDS provides a capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic entities (individuals, firms, industries), helps to create an environment for regional economic prosperity.

The 2020 Southern Iowa Council of Governments (SICOG) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) serves as a complete update of the previous regional plan (2019 CEDS). This CEDS will be submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) by March 30, 2020, and will fulfill Economic Development Administration Reform Act of 1998 guidelines.

The 2020 SICOG CEDS will provide a background summary, an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and a series of goals and objectives followed by an evaluation framework. This report will also address economic resilience by incorporating the concept throughout the document. The information in this document serves a variety of local and regional decision-makers. SICOG staff used established EDA guidelines to prepare the 2020 CEDS.

THE SOUTHERN IOWA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

OVERVIEW

The Southern Iowa Council of Governments (SICOG) is a non-profit organization that provides and coordinates community and economic development services primarily through the delivery of planning services, technical program assistance, grant writing, and grant administration to assist local governments and others in their efforts to improve the social and economic well-being of its eight-county service area.

SICOG serves an area in south central Iowa that includes Adair, Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Madison, Ringgold, Taylor and Union Counties. It is bounded on the north by the Region XII Council of Governments, on the south by the State of Missouri, on the west by the Southwest Iowa Planning Council, and on the east by Chariton Valley Planning and Development Council of Governments.

STAFF

Timothy J Ostroski, Executive Director
Judy K. Brimm, Finance Director
Jeremy Rounds, Regional Planner
Joel Lamb, Regional Planner
Stu Burzette, Transportation/Regional Planner
Nancy Groth, Office Manager

GOALS

The overall goal of SICOG is to provide a framework within which to create a comprehensive approach to area-wide development, and the orderly conservation of resources in the region. Services provided by SICOG include, but are not limited to:

- Economic Development: community marketing plans, development projects, and financial packaging
- Community Development: grant application and administration, special projects, and information resources
- Planning: comprehensive plans, recreation plans, zoning and subdivision regulations, annexations, site designs, neighborhood studies, and transportation planning
- Housing: grant application and administration, housing needs assessments, first-time home buyers' program, housing rehabilitation programs, special projects, housing trust fund, and information resources;
- Financial Assistance: revolving loan funds for: industries, businesses, home-owners, housing, and communities
- Technical Assistance: grant and funding research, budgets, census data, zoning, annexation, codification, geographic information systems, industrial recruitment, and housing development.

The Southern Iowa Council of Governments serves as the region's Economic Development District (EDD). The counties and cities in the region rely upon SICOG to meet federal and state planning requirements, as well as provide individual services to meet local community and economic development needs. SICOG's goal is to be on the cusp of changing, evolving, and emerging issues as described in this report.

EXECUTIVE BOARD AND CEDS STRATEGY COMMITTEE

In 2007, SICOG restructured its Executive Board to better meet the requirements of the EDA and to better represent the population that it serves. Since that time the CEDS committee has consisted of persons representing:

Agriculture	Health Care	State Government
Business	Housing	Tourism
Community Organizations	Industry	Transportation
Economic Development	Land Use	Utilities
Education	Local Government	Women
Finance	Recreation	

The CEDS Strategy Committee was created to consider all major interests of the eight-county region. It is made up of the SICOG Project Board members. The SICOG Executive Board and our member communities have approved the committee makeup and structure.

The CEDS Strategy Committee includes a representative from each county, the largest city in each county, the second largest city in each county, and the third largest city in each county, two (2) representatives from the private sector, as well as a member-at-large who is elected from one of the following groups: Executive Director of a Chamber of Commerce, a representative of an institution of post-secondary education, a representative from workforce development, or a representative from the labor groups. This committee structure is designed to maintain a strong presence with and connection to these entities to insure the CEDS is meeting its roles and responsibilities of promoting the CEDS regional goals.

Elected Government Representatives

<i>John Twombly</i>	Adair County Board of Supervisors
<i>Doug Birt</i>	Adams County Board of Supervisors
<i>Marvin McCann</i>	Clarke County Board of Supervisors
<i>Dan Christensen</i>	Decatur County Board of Supervisors
<i>Diane Fitch</i>	Madison County Board of Supervisors
<i>Lyle Minnick</i>	Ringgold County Board of Supervisors
<i>Ron Riley</i>	Union County Board of Supervisors
<i>Karen Zabel</i>	City of Lenox, Mayor (Representing Taylor County)

Private Sector Representatives

<i>Doug Davidson</i>	Orient Express
<i>Beth Waddle</i>	Precision Pulley & Idler
<i>William Trickey</i>	First National Bank
<i>Vacant</i>	

Stakeholder Organization Representatives

<i>Tom Lesan</i>	Southwestern Community College
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FIGURE 1. SICOG EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Name	Government or Company Representing
<i>John Twombly</i>	Adair County Board of Supervisors
<i>Tyson Sickles</i>	Fontanelle
<i>Ron Smith</i>	Greenfield
<i>John M. Larsen</i>	Adair
<i>Doug Davidson</i>	Orient Express
<i>Paul Nelson</i>	Union State Bank
<i>Doug Birt</i>	Adams County Board of Supervisors
<i>Bert Peckham</i>	Corning
<i>Jordan Walter</i>	Prescott
<i>Gary Poen</i>	Nodaway
<i>Beth Waddle</i>	Precision Pulley & Idler
<i>Larry Kester</i>	Red Star Feed
<i>Marvin McCann</i>	Clarke County Board of Supervisors
<i>Thomas Kedley</i>	Osceola
<i>Scott Busick</i>	Murray
<i>Denny Cottrell</i>	Woodburn
<i>William Trickey</i>	First National Bank
<i>Joe Greving</i>	Iowa Steel
<i>Dan Christensen</i>	Decatur County Board of Supervisors
<i>Douglas Foster</i>	Lamoni
<i>Allen Simmonds</i>	Leon
<i>Craig Stogdill</i>	Grand River
<i>Shane Akers</i>	Farmers Bank of Northern MO
<i>Shannon Erb</i>	Gilbert Home Comfort
<i>Diane Fitch</i>	Madison County Board of Supervisors
<i>Kelley Brown</i>	Winterset
<i>Jeff Lillie</i>	Earlham
<i>Dennis Smith</i>	St. Charles
<i>Brian Downes</i>	John Wayne Birthplace Society
<i>Tom Leners</i>	Union State Bank
<i>Lyle Minnick</i>	Ringgold County Board of Supervisors
<i>Steve Fetty</i>	Mt Ayr
<i>John Egly</i>	Diagonal
<i>Thomas Giles</i>	Kellerton
<i>Tracy Barnes</i>	US Bank
<i>Malcolm Eighmy</i>	Eighmy Monuments
<i>Doug Horton</i>	Taylor County Board of Supervisors
<i>Karen Zabel</i>	Lenox
<i>Frank Sefrit</i>	New Market

<i>Chris Knox</i>	Clearfield
<i>Don Keast</i>	Keast Accounting
<i>Vacant</i>	Taylor County Private Sector Representative
<i>Ron Riley</i>	Union County Board of Supervisors
<i>Steve Wintermute</i>	Creston
<i>Shelley Burger</i>	Afton
<i>Timothy Sly</i>	Lorimor
<i>Gabe Carroll</i>	Carroll Family Chiropractic
<i>Gary Riley</i>	Central Plains Electric
<i>Tom Lesan</i>	Southwestern Community College

FIGURE 2. 2020 SICOG CEDS COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

Community input is critical to the CEDS planning process. An outline of the public input process follows:

- A survey is conducted among member cities, counties, economic development groups, and the CEDS strategy committee from SICOG's eight-county region to determine their priorities and their economic development plans for the upcoming year. Responses are then compiled and prioritized by SICOG staff. An updated SWOT Analysis is conducted utilizing input from cities, counties, economic development groups, SICOG County Project Board members, and SICOG Executive Board members.
- Draft copies of the CEDS document are compiled.
- The SICOG Executive Board, who has an opportunity to provide input into the planning process, reviews draft copies of the CEDS.
- The Draft CEDS document is made available on the SICOG website and in hardcopy format to interested parties for a thirty-day period.
- SICOG staff publish notice in The Windmill (SICOG's newsletter distributed to cities, counties, economic development groups and other interested parties throughout the region) on its website and on Facebook. Public comments are solicited during a thirty-day review period.
- The Final CEDS document is approved.
- An annual CEDS performance report document is prepared annually by the SICOG organization.
- A new CEDS document is prepared every 5 years or sooner depending on various circumstances

The priorities, goals and objectives listed in this document reflect the combined efforts of the CEDS Committee and input received in our annual CEDS Questionnaires and Surveys that ask communities to identify their goals for the coming years and through the SWOT analysis.

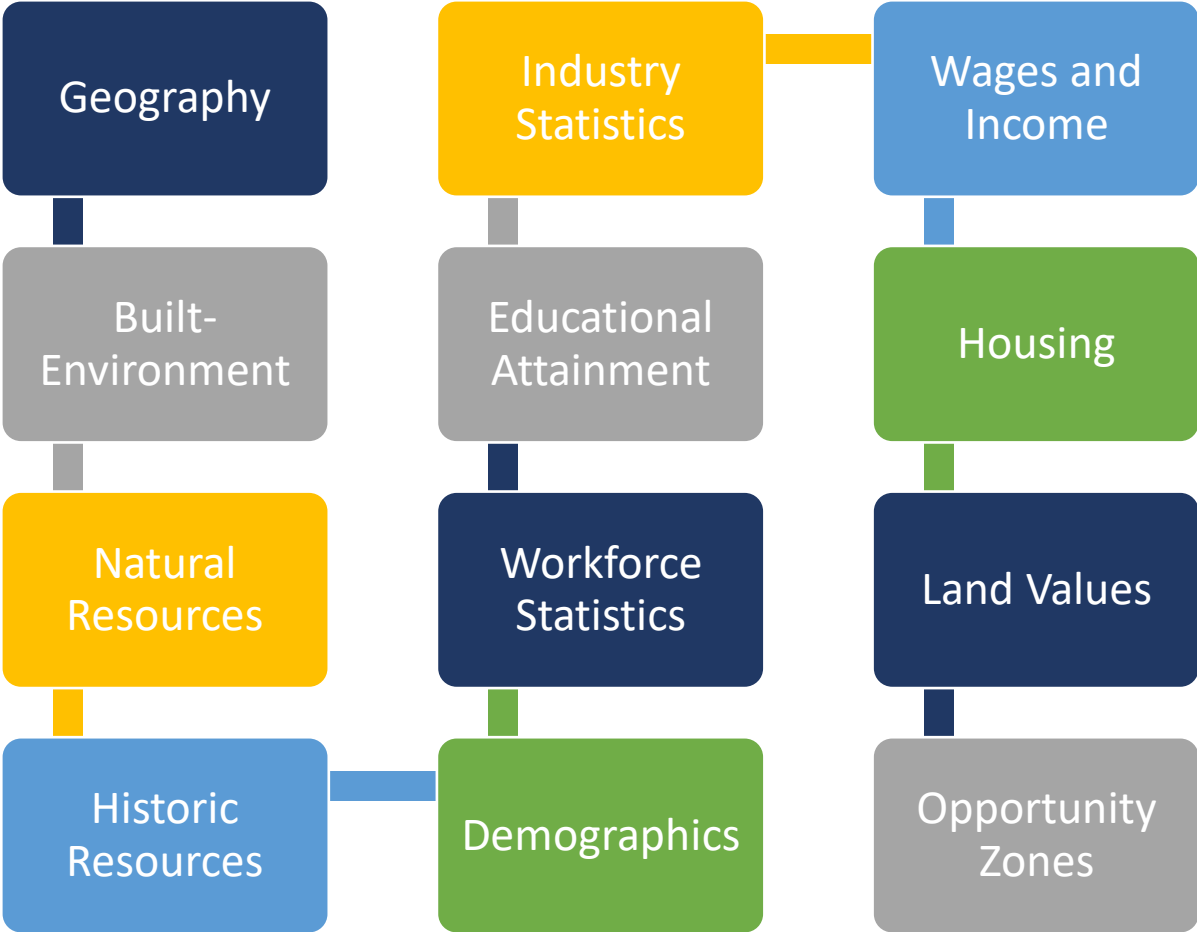
The CEDS Strategy Committee is comprised of representatives from various segments of the region. The committee represents all major interest groups providing viewpoints that give a well-balanced perspective for the region. The trends, opportunities, and limitations affecting the economic growth of the region have been identified and related to the trends of the national and global market. The mission/vision and goals of SICOG have been adopted and used as the vision for the CEDS process and are used as the foundation to build upon when developing goals and strategies for the region. The CEDS Committee composition, the community input, and the process for the analysis and formulation of this document have provided ample opportunity for community and private sector participation.

DRAFT CEDS REVIEW PERIOD

February 24, 2020 through March 25, 2020

The draft CEDS is available for review and comment by the public for a period of at least 30 days prior to submission of the CEDS to EDA. The Draft CEDS document is made available in electronic or hard copy format to the public during this time period. Interested parties (cities, counties, economic development organizations, regional transportation organizations, major employers, etc.) receive a copy or are notified of the availability of the Draft CEDS document, allowing for review and comments during the 30-day period. The availability of copies of the Draft CEDS document and the opportunity to participate in the comment period are also advertised in the SICOG newsletter, on the SICOG website, and on the SICOG Facebook page. Copies of the Draft CEDS are made available in hardcopy form from Southern Iowa Council of Governments, 101 East Montgomery Street, Creston, IA 50801, 641-782-8491 or from burzette@sicog.com. Electronic copies are also available by download from the SICOG webpage <http://www.sicog.com/>

SUMMARY BACKGROUND



GEOGRAPHY, BUILT-ENVIRONMENT, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

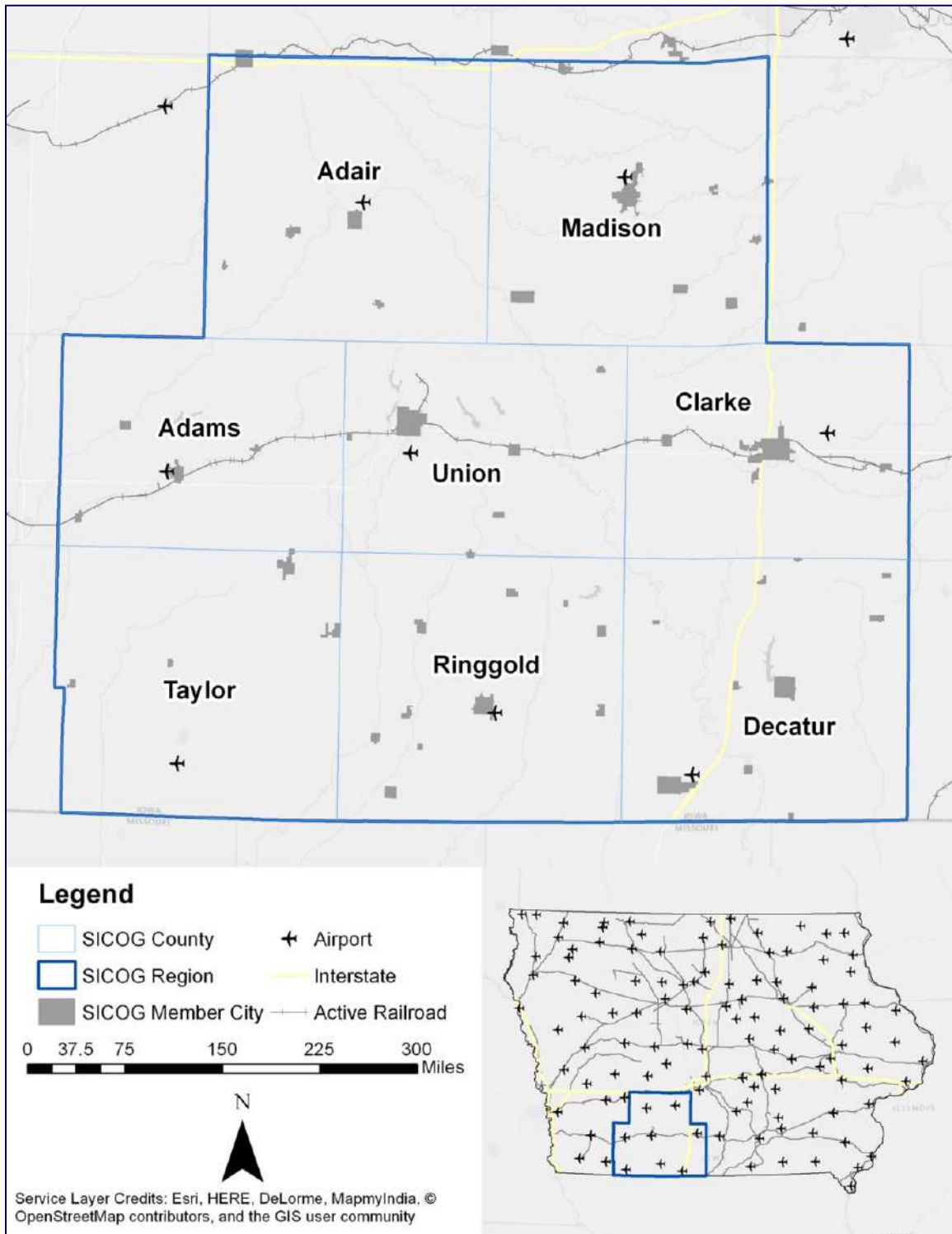


FIGURE 3. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF SICOG REGION, COUNTIES, MEMBER CITIES, INTERSTATES, RAILROAD, AND AIRPORTS | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU & IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

GEOGRAPHY AND THE BUILT-ENVIRONMENT

The SICOG region is located directly southwest of the Des Moines Metropolitan Area covering eight counties. The eight counties have an area of 2,566,458 acres or 4,009 square miles. The major metropolitan centers exerting an influence on the area include Des Moines, Iowa, Omaha, Nebraska, and Kansas City, Missouri. Interstate 35, the major north-south highway connecting Kansas City, Des Moines, and Minneapolis/St. Paul, traverses the Southern Iowa region on the eastern edge. Interstate 80, the major east-west highway connecting Chicago, Des Moines, and Omaha traverses the region on the northern edge. The Burlington-Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad runs across the center of the region with stops in Osceola and Creston. There are eight small airports in the region located in Bedford, Corning, Creston, Greenfield, Lamoni, Mount Ayr, Osceola, and Winterset. The closest commercial airport is located in Des Moines.

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The region, along with the rest of Southern Iowa, lies in the Southern Iowa Drift plain. This results in rolling hills and more mature streams and hydrologic features than other topographical regions of Iowa. Four geologic ages cover the region, these can be seen in the appendix. Due to the geologic history of the region, two major land resource areas (MLRAs) split the region in half. Those major land resource areas are Illinois and Iowa Deep Loess and Drift and Iowa and Missouri Heavy Till Plain. A majority of the land in these two MLRAs is used as cropland followed by grassland and forest land. A map of the MLRAs can be seen in the appendix. The most predominant rock types in the region are limestone, sandstone, and shale. The second most predominant rock types in the region are claystone and siltstone along with limestone, sandstone, and shale where they are not the most predominant rock type. Maps of the predominant rock types can be seen in the appendix.

WATER RESOURCES

Like all of Iowa, the region has many rivers, streams, tributaries, and lakes. Many of these hydrologic features are used as water sources including Three Mile Lake, Green Valley Lake, Platte River, Little River and Little River Lake, and others. Many of these major water sources are also considered impaired rivers and lakes due to various pollutants, commonly related to agricultural runoff. Associated with these hydrologic features are floodplains, which run through the region like veins. Floodplains are very important natural features to consider as they are prone to floods, hence their name. As climate change continues to impact the region, floods will become more extreme and/or more common. This makes it more important than ever to know the locations and extents of the 100-year floodplains and the 500-year flood plains in the region. At a larger scale of water movement are watersheds. The SICOG region intersects or contains 39 watersheds. Many of these watersheds reach far

beyond the region into neighboring counties. Thirteen watersheds reach into Northern Missouri. Maps of hydrologic features in the region can be seen in the appendix.

CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The region lies in the humid continental climate zone, which covers most of the north-central United States. Warm summers and cold winters are common with high fluctuations of precipitation and extreme temperatures year to year.

As a result of the natural resources noted previously, the ecology of the region is split into two ecoregions. The ecoregion with the most cover, Southern Iowa Rolling Loess Prairies, covers 100 percent of Taylor, Adams, Adair, and Madison County, about 75 percent of Union County, and about 25 to 30 percent of Clarke and Ringgold County. The rest of the region, 25 percent of Union County, 70-75 percent of Clarke and Ringgold County, and 100 percent of Decatur County are included in the Loess Flats and Till Plains ecoregion. The Southern Iowa Rolling Loess Prairies ecoregion is characterized today by cropland and small areas of deciduous forest. Historically, the ecoregion was covered by bluestem prairie and oak-hickory forest. This ecoregion also stretches from the SICOG region all the way to the Mississippi River near Davenport and also near Burlington. The Loess Flats and Till Plains ecoregion is a much smaller ecoregion in Iowa. It covers most of the southern border of Iowa and has much of the same current and historic land use and land covers. The major difference is a more prominent pasture land use in this ecoregion.

Both of these ecoregions provide for a wide variety of animal habitat as well as vegetation habitat. The most important to consider are the endangered species. A list of endangered species in the region is shown below.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Status</i>
<i>Indiana Bat</i> (<i>Myotis sodalists</i>)	Mammals	Endangered
<i>Northern Long-eared Bat</i> (<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>)	Mammals	Threatened
<i>Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid</i> (<i>Platanthera leucophaea</i>)	Flowering Plants	Threatened
<i>Mead's Milkweed</i> (<i>Asclepias meadii</i>)	Flowering Plants	Threatened
<i>Prairie Bush-clover</i> (<i>Lespedeza leptostachya</i>)	Flowering Plants	Threatened
<i>Western Prairie Fringed Orchid</i> (<i>Platanthera praeclara</i>)	Flowering Plants	Threatened
<i>Topeka Shiner</i> (<i>Notropis topeka</i>)	Fish	Endangered (Critical Habitat)

FIGURE 4. ENDANGERED SPECIES IN THE SICOG REGION | SOURCE: US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

HISTORIC, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The SICOG region has many buildings and structures listed on the national register of historic places. This includes 76 buildings and 12 structures (mostly bridges). A large portion of these historic places are located in Winterset and rural Madison County. The SICOG region is also home to a stretch of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. This trail runs across the SICOG region from the northeast corner of Decatur County, through Clarke and Union County, and out the southwest corner of Adair County. This historic trail is commonly used for recreational purposes and runs through multiple state parks and conservation areas. A map of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail can be seen in the appendix along with the public conservation/recreation lands in the region. Maps of all historic buildings and structures can be found in the appendix as well

REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

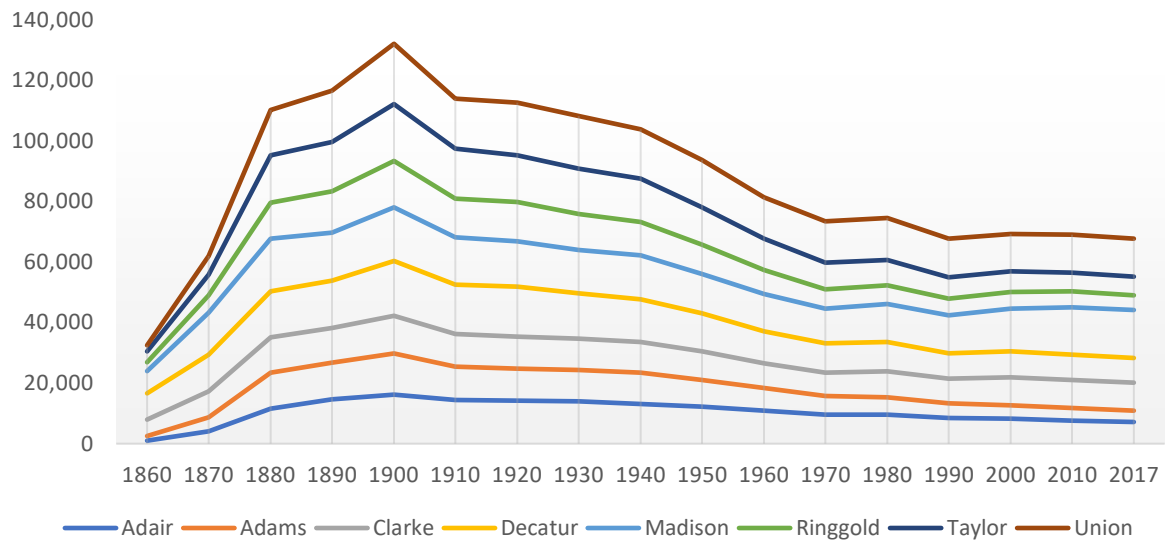


FIGURE 5. SICOG REGION POPULATION | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

As seen in Figure 5, the regional population of the SICOG Region peaked at just under 134,000 in 1900. Since then, it has declined, resulting in a 2017 ACS 5-year estimation of about 70,000 individuals. This number has stayed around 70,000 since 1990, therefore, no significant growths or shrinkages are expected from a regional perspective in the foreseeable future.

Figure 6 shows the regional population by county. Madison County has the highest share of individuals in the region, followed by Union County and Clarke County. The smallest counties in terms of population are Adams, Ringgold, and Taylor, which sit at six, seven and nine percent of the regional population, respectively.

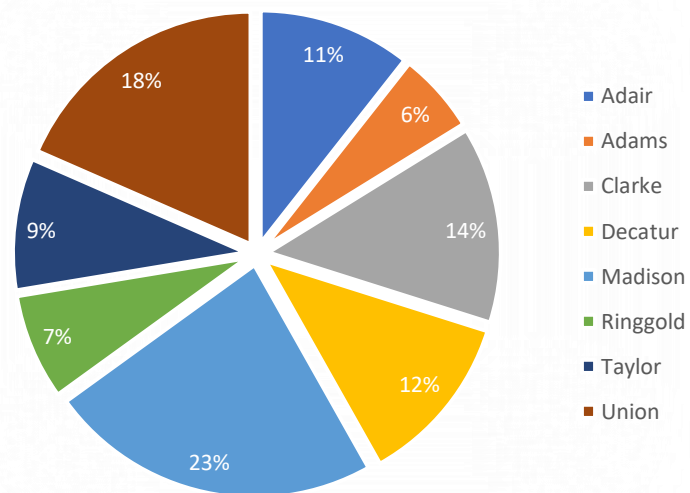


FIGURE 6. REGIONAL POPULATION BY COUNTY | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

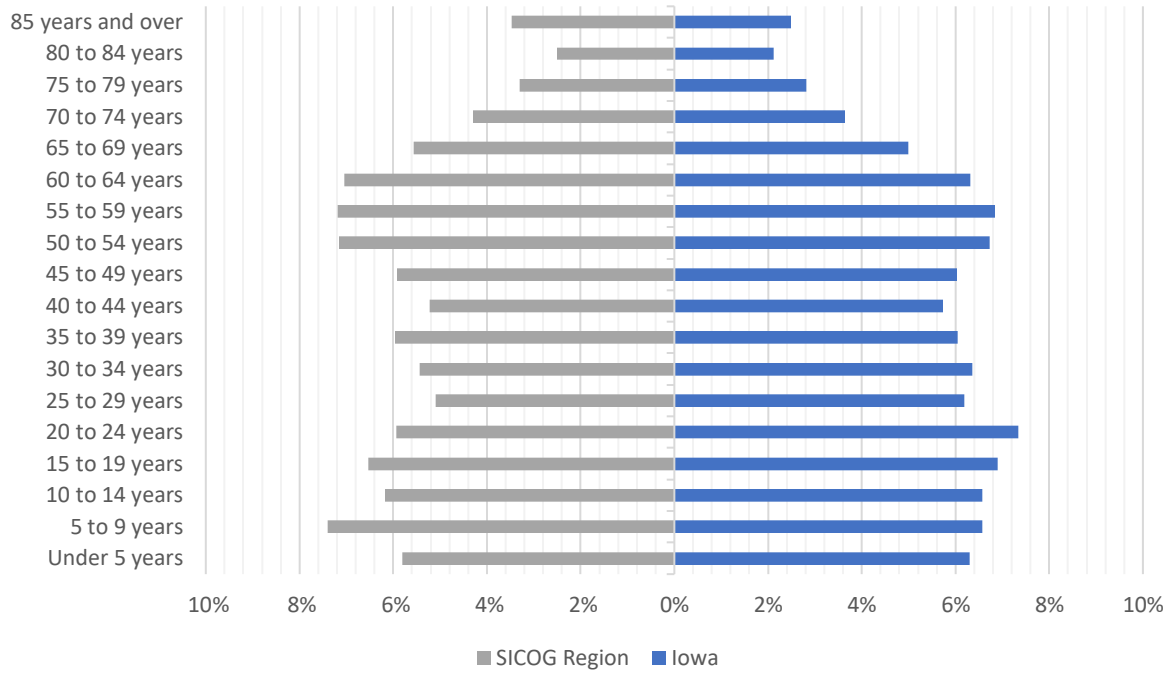


FIGURE 7. REGIONAL POPULATION BY AGE COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

Figure 7, above, is the population of the region separated by age compared to the State of Iowa. There are not many significant differences between the two geographies, however, the SICOG Region generally has more individuals in retirement age or reaching retirement age within the next ten years and more children aged five to nine years. There are also fewer individuals between the ages of 20 and 35 years.

The median age of residents in the region (Figure 8) varies by county. The lowest median age was found in Decatur County at 36.5 years and the highest was found in Adams County at 47.7 years. All counties, with the exception of Decatur, were above the statewide median by at least two years.

The aging population that the region is experiencing will likely need to be addressed in all aspects including economic development, housing, transportation, and others. This will be especially problematic if the younger generations do not stay in the region or the ones who left do not begin to return to the region to take over the jobs of the retiring generations as well as develop a regional economy and society that allows for continued support for the aging population.

Geography	Median Age
<i>Adair</i>	45.7
<i>Adams</i>	47.7
<i>Clarke</i>	40.7
<i>Decatur</i>	36.5
<i>Madison</i>	40.8
<i>Ringgold</i>	45.0
<i>Taylor</i>	43.3
<i>Union</i>	40.1
Iowa	38.1

FIGURE 8. MEDIAN AGE BY COUNTY COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

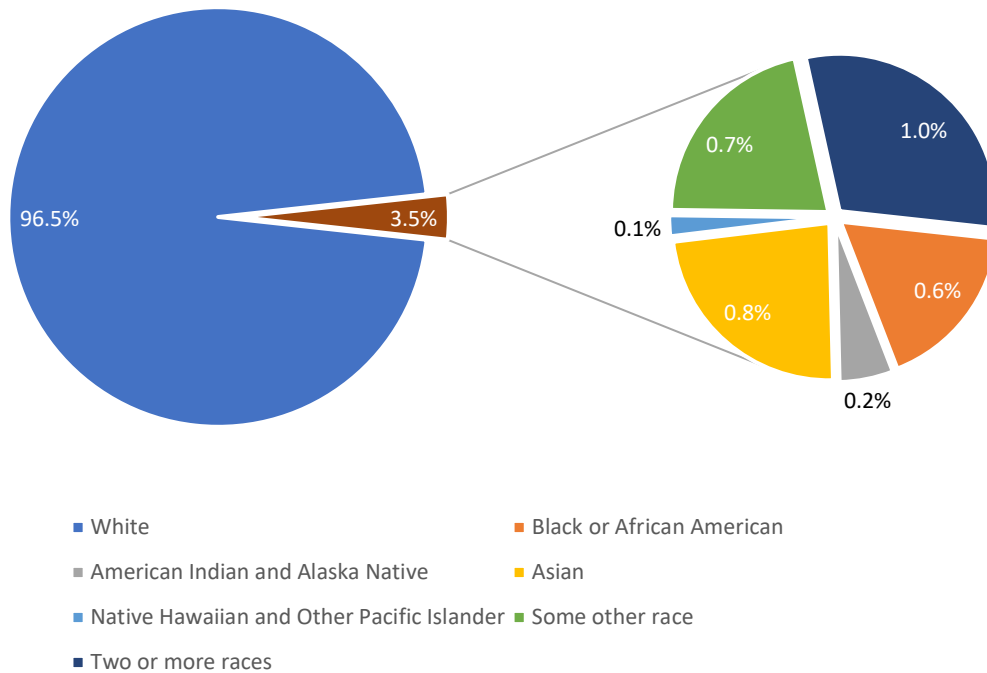


FIGURE 9. REGIONAL RACE AND ETHNICITY | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

The figure above shows the racial and ethnic breakdown of the regional population. The region is mostly white with only 3.5 percent of individuals identifying as non-white or two or more races. Similar percentages are seen when examining the Hispanic or Latino population. A vast majority of the region is non-Hispanic or Latino. These statistics are very consistent across all counties with the exception of Taylor County and Clarke County who have Hispanic or Latino populations equal to 7.5 percent and 12.7 percent of their total population. The figure to the right shows the proportion Hispanic or Latino individuals compared to the statewide average. They are very similar.

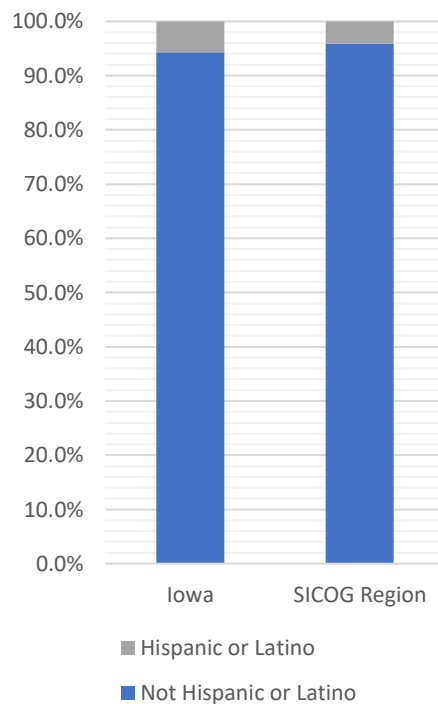


FIGURE 10. REGIONAL HISPANIC POPULATION COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

WORKFORCE

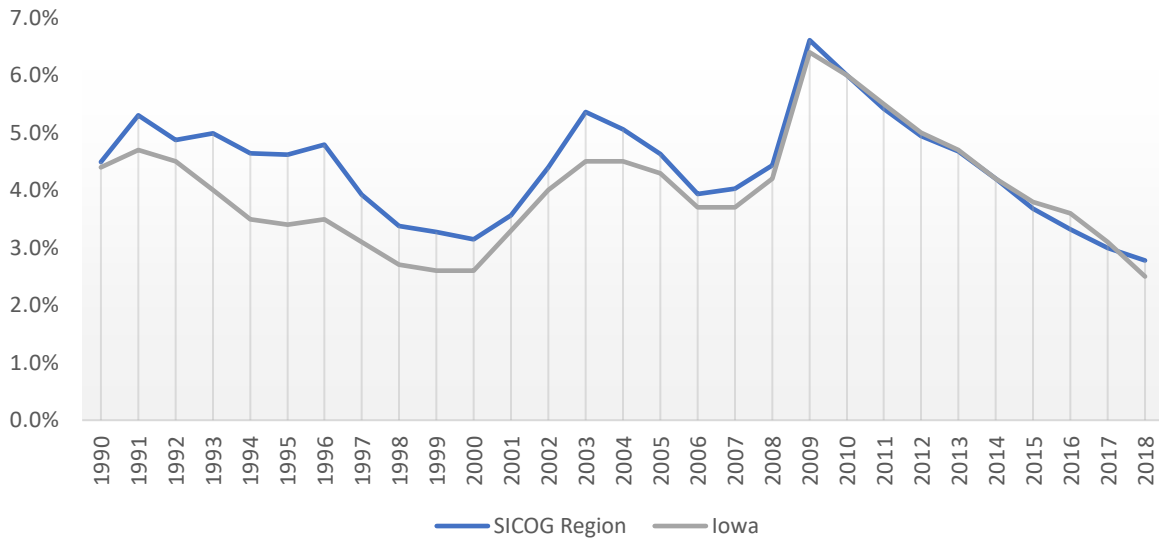


FIGURE 11. REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

The unemployment rate, seen in the figure above, has largely followed the statewide trend throughout the last two decades. Beginning in 2008, the regional unemployment matched the statewide average almost exactly. This mirroring of statewide unemployment could indicate that this regional economy is very similar to the State of Iowa economy, which relies on an agricultural backbone that does not sway as heavily as other economic sectors.

Figure 12 shows the breakdown of unemployment of the region by county in the number of unemployed individuals.

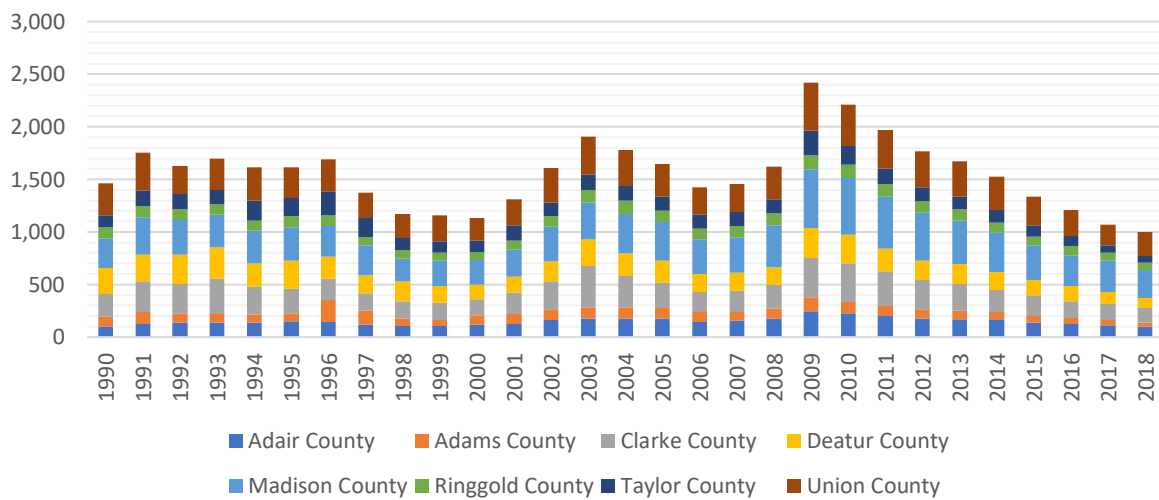


FIGURE 12. REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT BY COUNTY | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

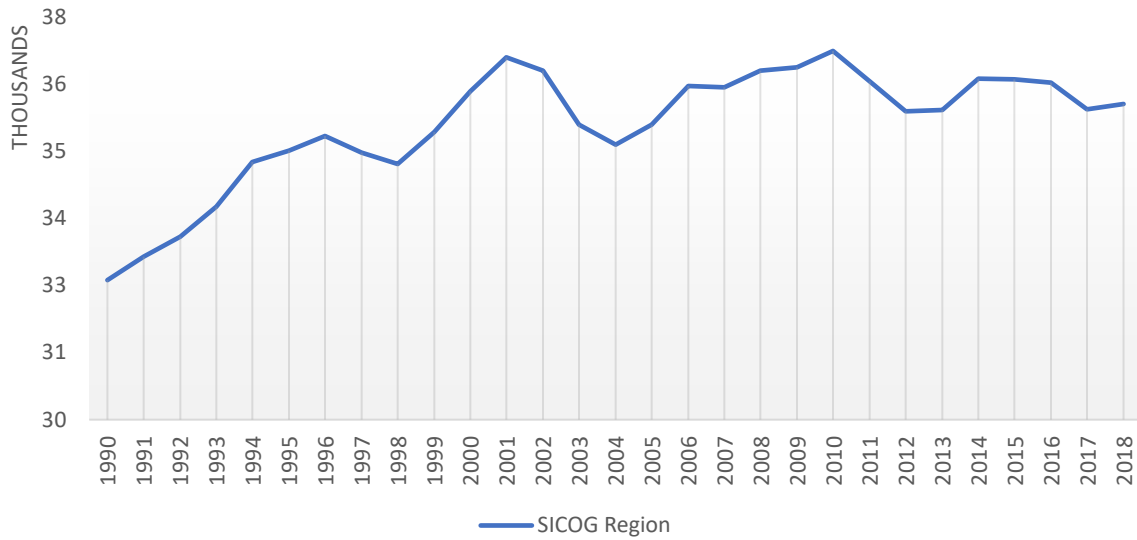


FIGURE 13. REGIONAL LABOR FORCE | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

The regional labor force in the SICOG Region, seen above, has risen by about 3,000 since 1990. Most of this growth occurred in the 1990s, however, and initially peaked in 2001 before a sharp drop. The labor force peaked again in 2010 at about 37,000 and has remained mostly steady, with a slight decline, since then. There is little indication, barring an economic recession, that the labor force will change significantly. Generally, the labor force participation in the SICOG region is similar or slightly lower than the statewide average. The only county with a labor force participation rate higher than the State of Iowa is Madison County. The lowest participation rates are found in Ringgold, Decatur, and Adams Counties as seen below.

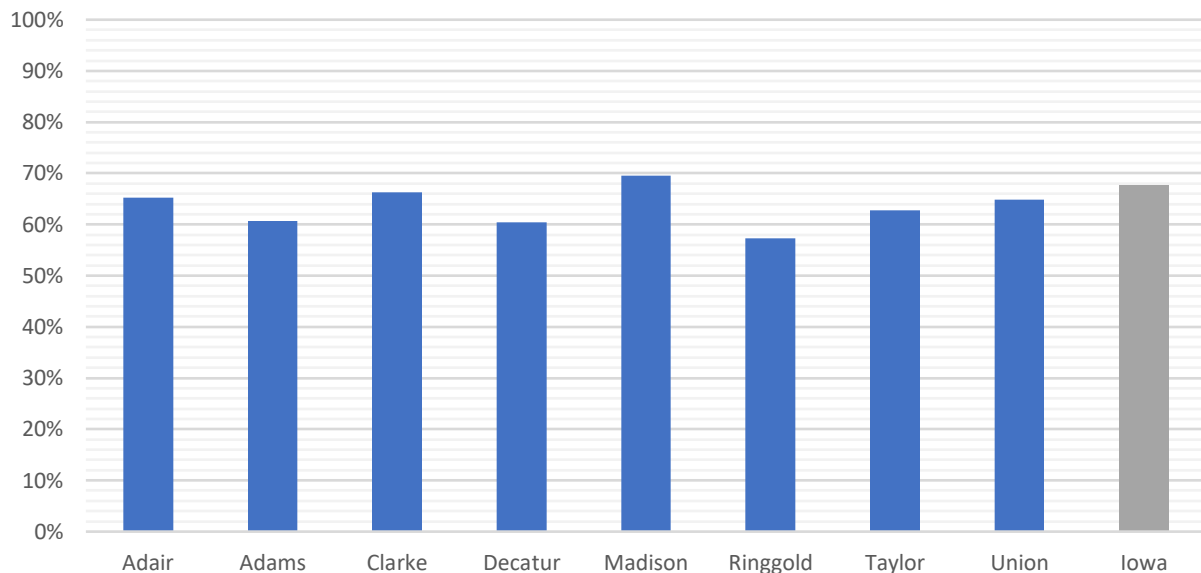


FIGURE 14. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY COUNTY COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

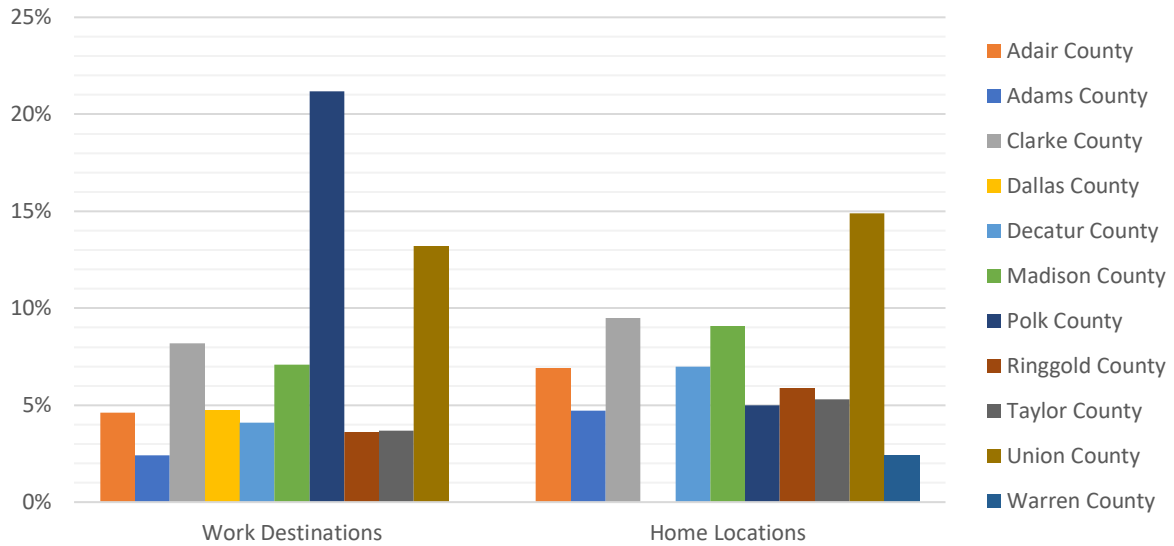
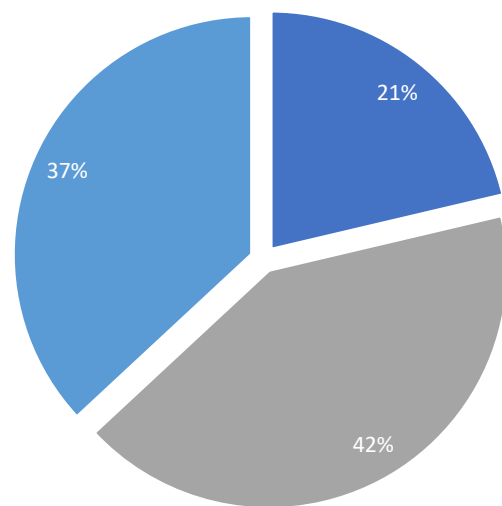


FIGURE 15. COMMUTING PATTERNS FOR WORKERS IN THE REGION BY COUNTY | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

The commuting patterns of the labor force is important to consider as it could give an indication of the quality of life in the region as well as an indication of the quality of jobs in the region. Figure 15 shows the work destinations and home locations of workers in the region broken down by county. Polk County is by far the single largest work destination of workers in the SICOG Region. This is expected since Polk County is the center of the Des Moines Metropolitan Area. Very few people commute from Polk County to the SICOG region, as seen on the home locations side. Union County is a major work destination and home location in the region. This is also predictable, as Creston, the largest city in the region, is located in Union County. Clarke County (Osceola) and Madison County (Winterset) are also major sources and destinations of workers.

The chart to the right shows the overall proportions for commuter habits in the region. Almost 80 percent of workers live in the SICOG region but less than 40 percent of them work in the region as well.



- Employed in SICOG Region but Live Outside
- Live in SICOG Region but Employed Outside
- Employed and Live in SICOG Region

FIGURE 16. OVERALL COMMUTING PATTERNS FOR WORKERS IN THE REGION | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

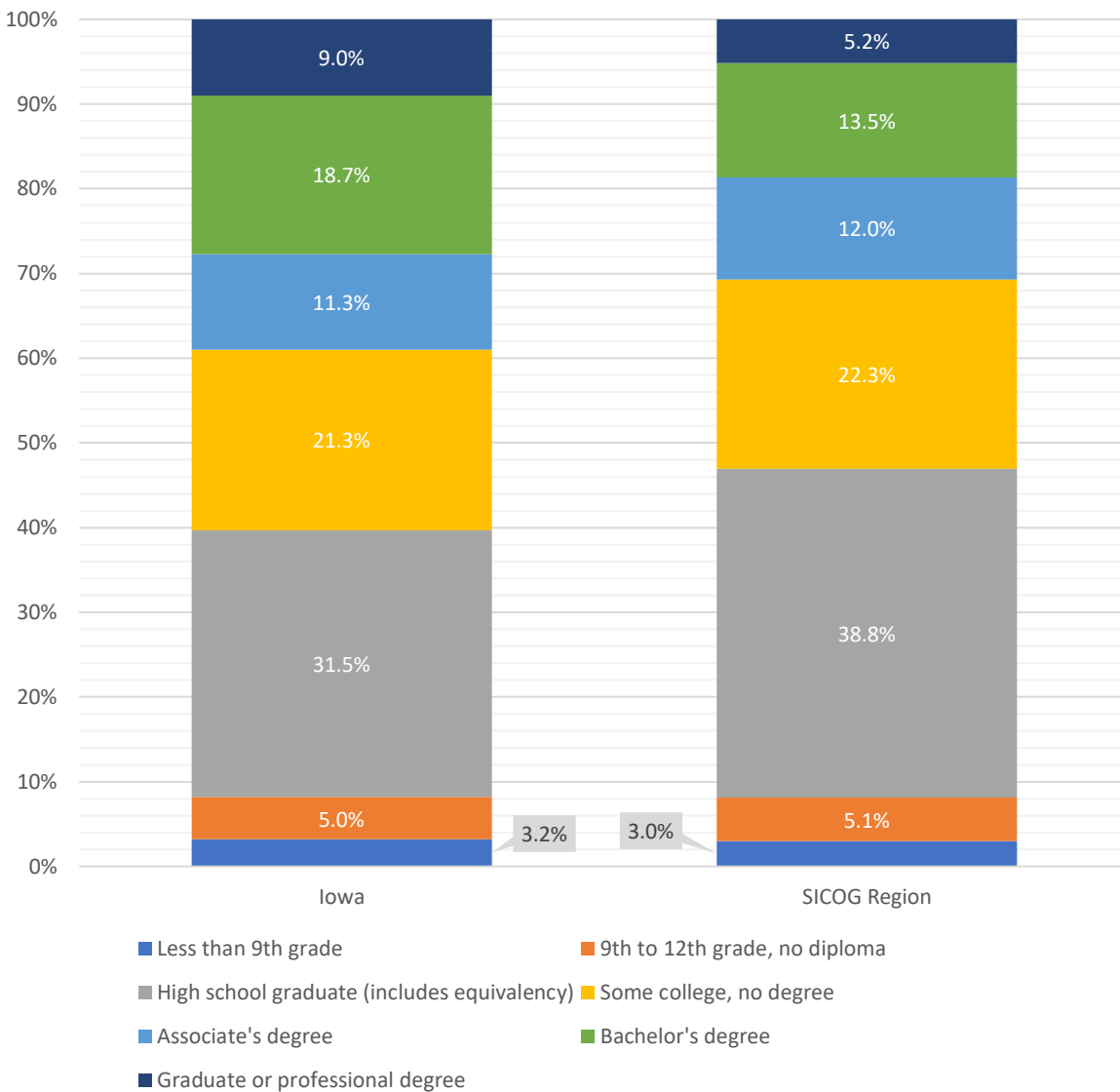


FIGURE 17. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE REGION COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

The educational attainment in the SICOG Region is similar to the State of Iowa overall in most respects as seen in Figure 17. They have similar percentages with individuals with an educational attainment less than a high school diploma along with similar rates of individuals who have started college but have not finished an associate's degrees. Where the two geographies differ, is in the percentages of individuals with high school diplomas, individuals with bachelor's degrees, and individuals with graduate degrees. About seven percent more of the SICOG region population has an education attainment of a high school diploma. This is mostly balanced by the negative differences in the bachelor's degree and graduate degree categories.

INDUSTRY

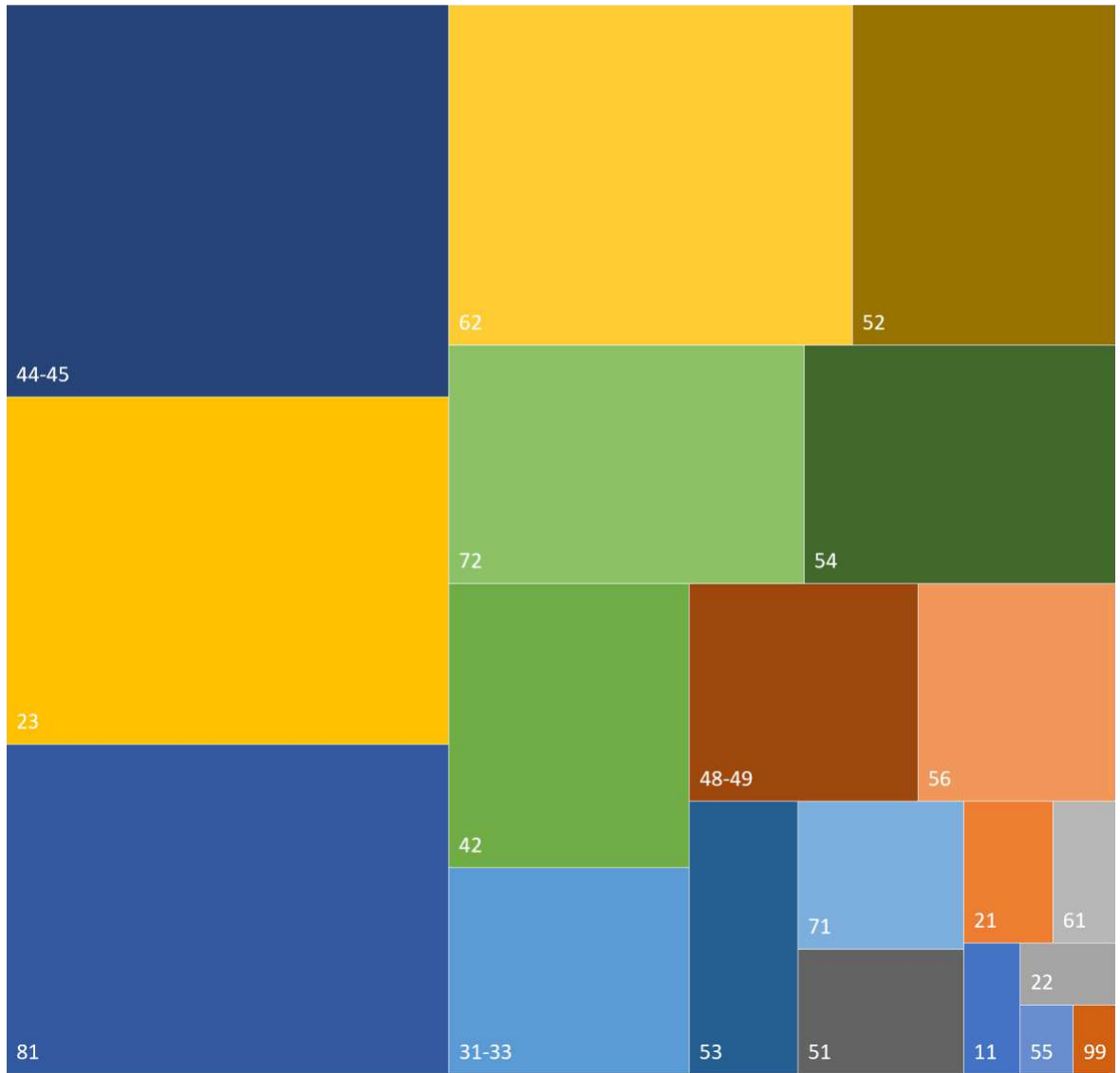


FIGURE 18. INDUSTRY MAKEUP OF THE REGION BY NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS| SOURCE: US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Figure 18 shows the industry of the region by the number of establishments, labeled with their NAICS code. These codes are labeled in Figure 19 on the next page. As shown, NAICS Industry code 44-45, Retail Trade, is the largest industry in the region with 234 establishments. The industry with the second highest number of establishments (207) is the construction industry (NAICS code 23). No other industry topped 200 establishments. NAICS code 81, Other Services, reached 197 but the category is miscellaneous in nature and the establishments in this category likely fit into other industry categories as well.

<i>NAICS Code</i>	<i>Industry Description</i>
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
22	Utilities
23	Construction
31-33	Manufacturing
42	Wholesale trade
44-45	Retail trade
48-49	Transportation and warehousing
51	Information
52	Finance and insurance
53	Real estate and rental and leasing
54	Professional, scientific, and technical services
55	Management of companies and enterprises
56	Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services
61	Educational Services
62	Health care and social assistance
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation
72	Accommodation and food services
81	Other services (except public administration)
99	Industries not classified

FIGURE 19. NAICS INDUSTRY CODES

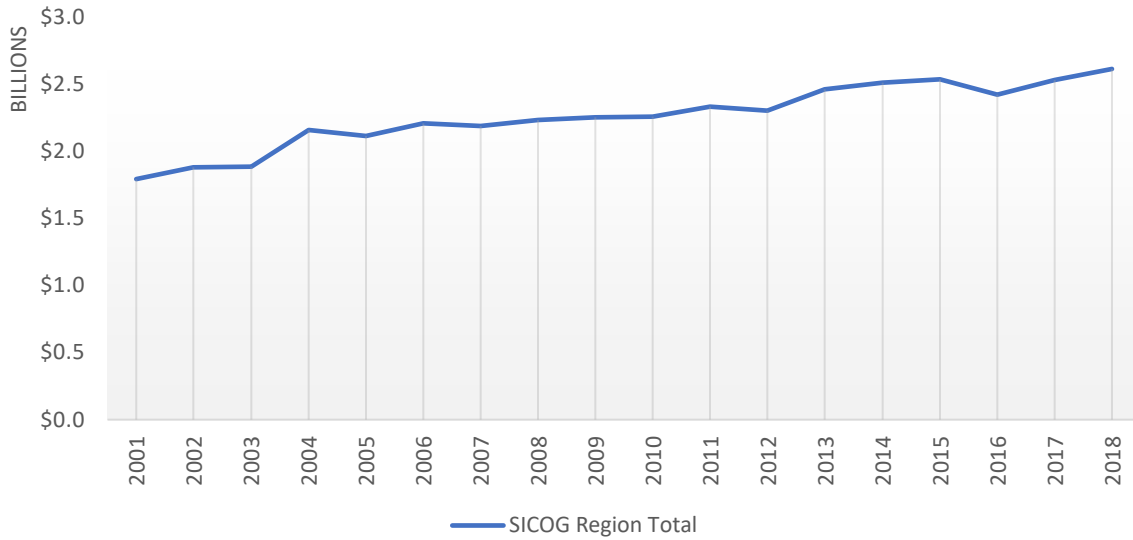


FIGURE 20. REGIONAL REAL GDP | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The total Real Gross Domestic Product (Real GDP) of the SICOG region is shown above. Since 2001, it has slightly increased from \$1.8 billion to about \$2.6 billion. The graph of all Real GDPs of the counties in the region is shown in Figure 21. Union County has consistently had the highest Real GDP since the turn of the century, likely due to its county seat city, Creston, which is larger than some of the counties by itself. In recent years, Adams County has moved from second lowest Real GDP to top five, just below Adair.

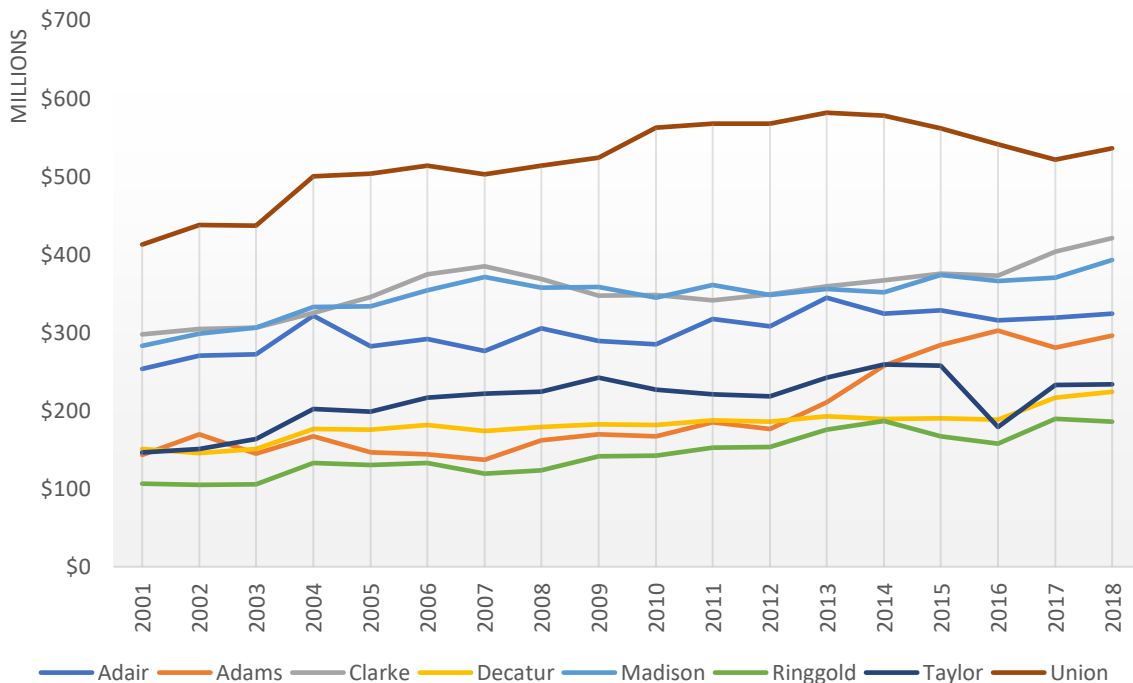


FIGURE 21. REAL GDP BY COUNTY | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

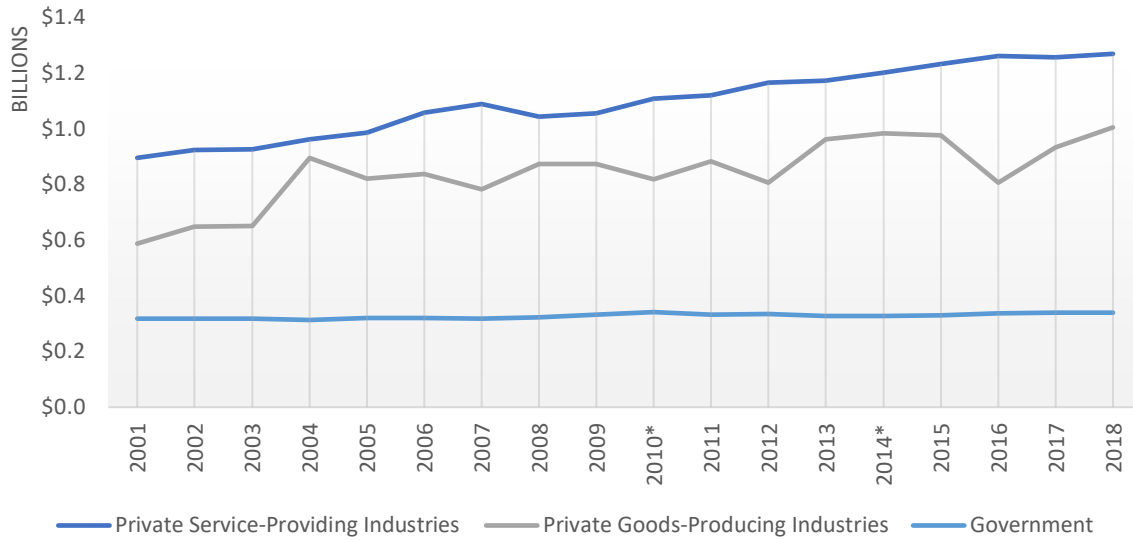


FIGURE 22. PRIVATE SERVICE-PROVIDING, PRIVATE GOODS-PRODUCING, AND GOVERNMENT REAL GDP | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS | *ONE OR MORE VALUES WAS IMPUTED DUE TO DATA LIMITATIONS

The graph above shows the regional real GDP broken into private service providing industries, private goods-producing industries, and government. The real GDP of government has increased only seven percent since 2001. In the same time period, private sector service-providing industries real GDP has increased almost 42 percent and private sector goods-producing industries real GDP has increased 71 percent.

The graph below details the percent of total regional real GDP that is attributed to the private sector service-providing and private sector goods-producing industries along with the public sector.

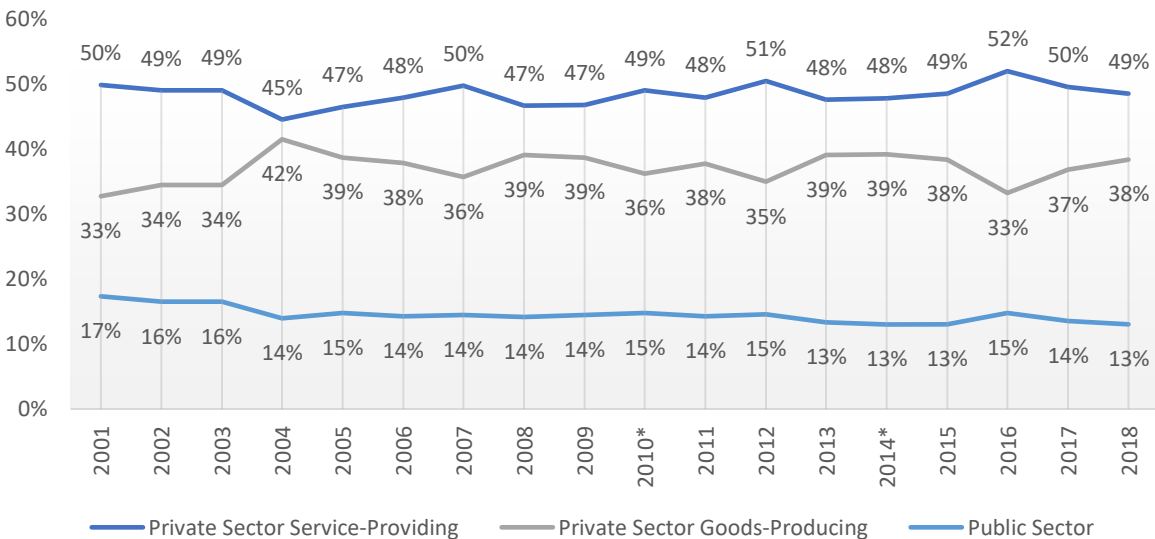


FIGURE 23. PERCENTS OF TOTAL REGIONAL REAL GDP BY SECTOR AND BASIC INDUSTRY | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS | *ONE OR MORE VALUES WAS IMPUTED DUE TO DATA LIMITATIONS

WAGES AND INCOME

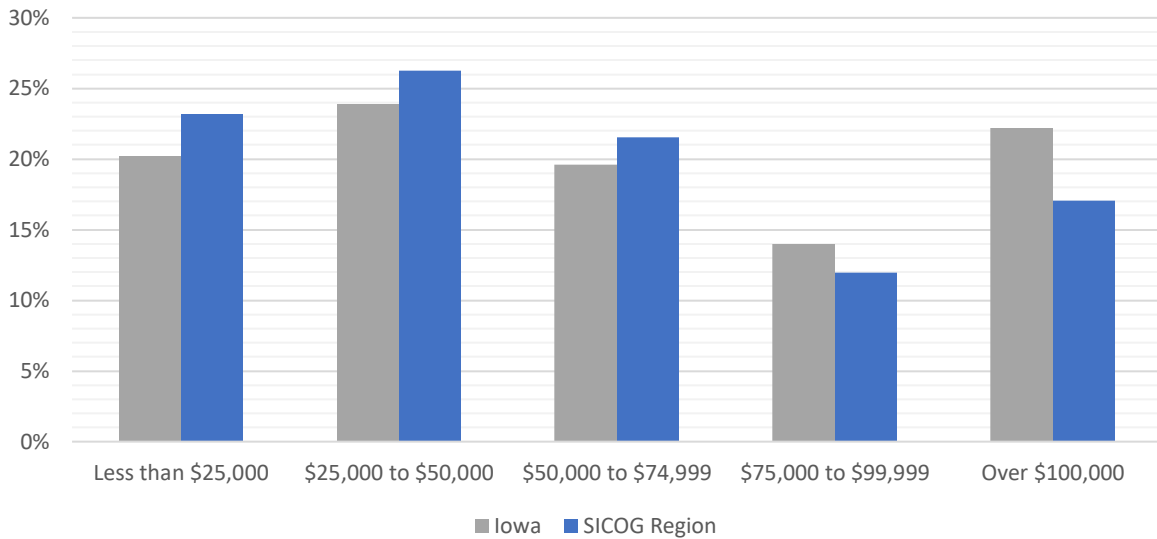


FIGURE 24. REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

Figure 24, above shows the household income for the SICOG region compared to Iowa. The regional population is much more concentrated in the bottom three tiers than the State of Iowa overall. The general pattern of the household incomes is the same, except for the final tier, which is the second highest for the State but the second lowest for the region. This could be an indication of higher income equality in the region when compared to the State of Iowa in general.

The graph below, Figure 25, shows the median household income by county for the region. Madison County is the only county in the region with a higher median household income than the State of Iowa. All other counties sit within \$4,000 of \$50,000 except for Decatur County, which sits at \$41,042.

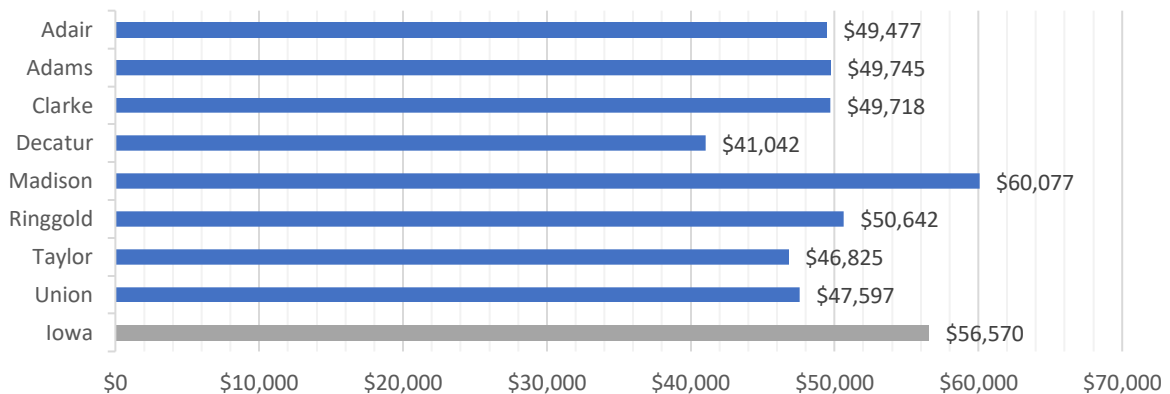


FIGURE 25. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY COUNTY COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

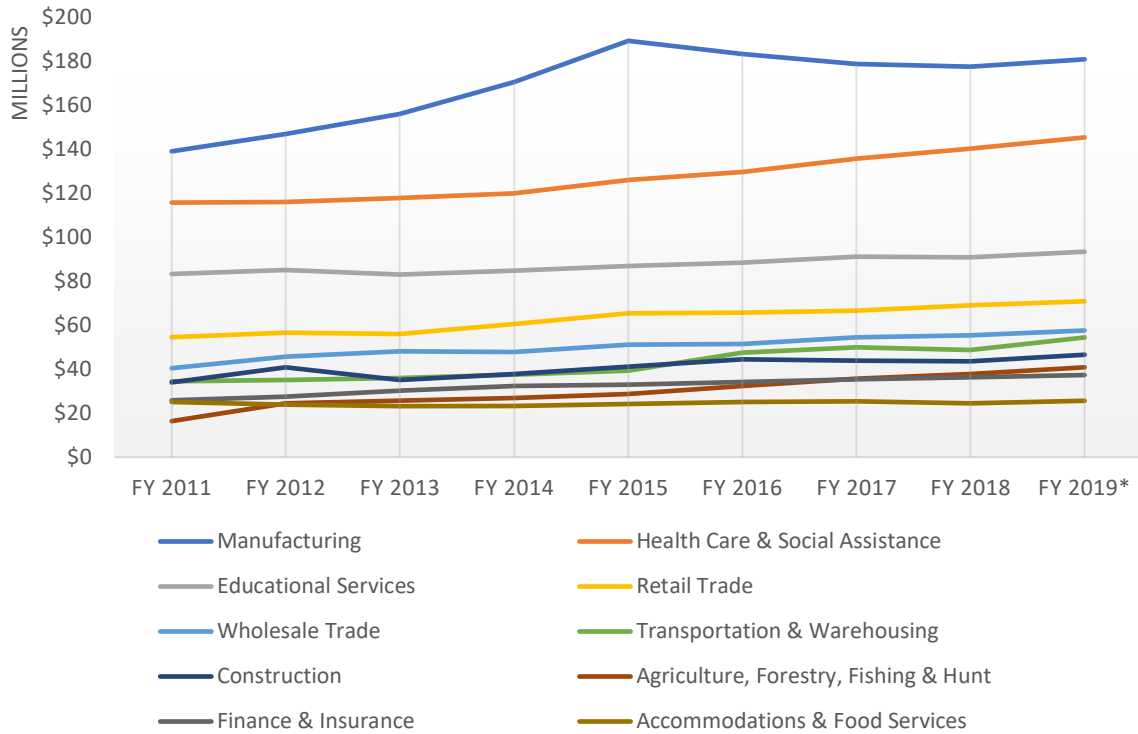


FIGURE 26. TOTAL WAGES BY INDUSTRY (TOP TEN) | SOURCE: IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | *ONE OR MORE VALUES WAS IMPUTED DUE TO DATA LIMITATIONS

Figure 26, above, displays the total wages by sector for the top ten sectors in the region. Most of the industries follow the same pattern of growth since FY 2011. The highest wages payer in the region, Manufacturing, peaked in FY 2015 then slowly recovered and can likely expect to reach the peak again in a few years. The second and third highest wages payers, Health Care and Social Assistance and Educational Services, are both mainly government or government-related services. This is despite real GDP from government work having a minimal role in the regional real GDP.

The figure to the right shows the same data as a percentage of total regional wages. It shows, among other things, that the Manufacturing, Health Care, and Educational Services industries are responsible for over 50 percent of wages in the region.

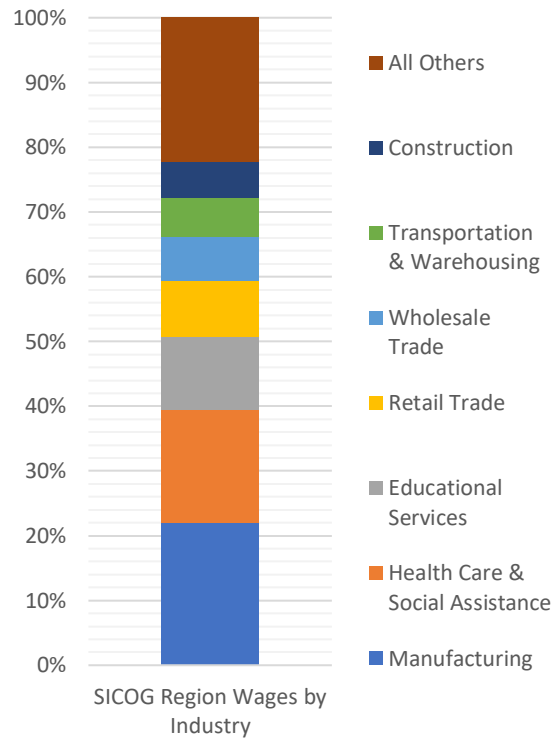


FIGURE 27. TOTAL WAGES AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL REGIONAL WAGES BY INDUSTRY | SOURCE: IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

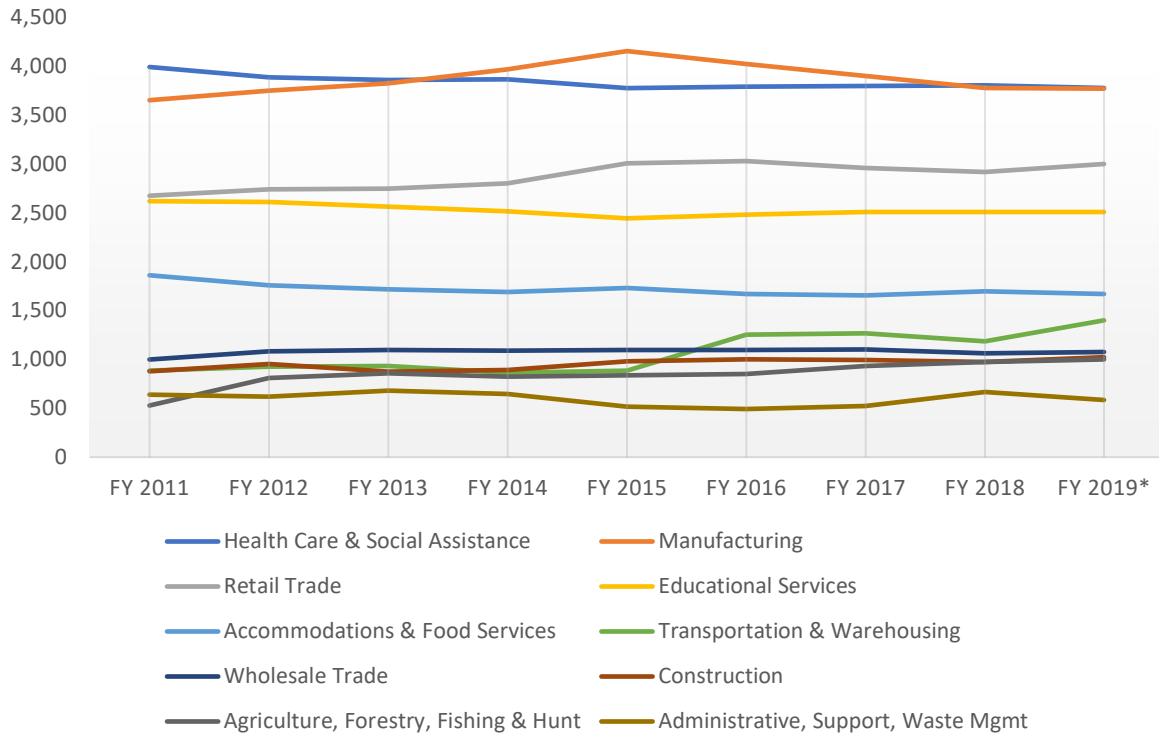


FIGURE 28. TOTAL REGIONAL EMPLOYEES BY INDUSTRY (TOP TEN) | SOURCE: IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | *ONE OR MORE VALUES WAS IMPUTED DUE TO DATA LIMITATIONS

Figure 28, above, shows the top ten employing industries. In the SICOG region, Health Care and Social Assistance and Manufacturing are the two largest employers. They are followed by Retail Trade and Educational Services. All other industries employed fewer than 2,000 individuals in the region.

The chart to the right shows the percentages of employees by industry in the region. The top four employing industries are the same as Figure X with Health Care and Social Assistance and Manufacturing each employing about 17 percent of the total regional employees. Retail Trade and Educational Attainment employ about 13 and 11 percent of the total regional employees. All other industries were below ten percent.

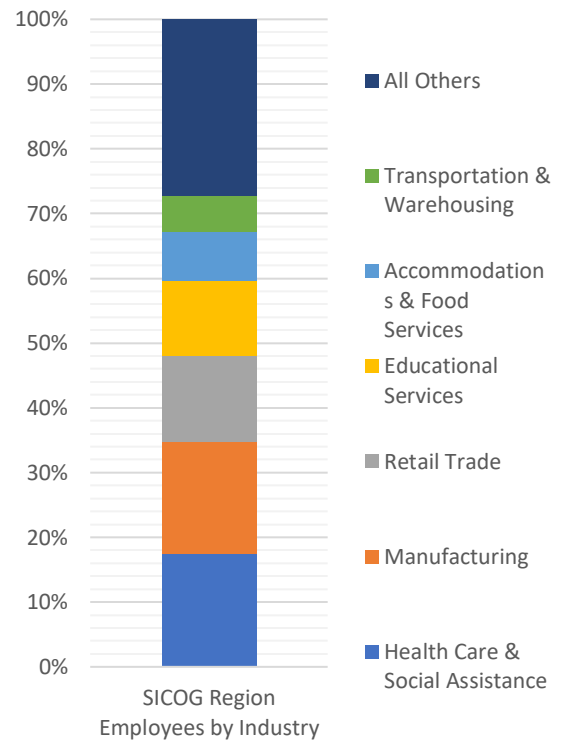


FIGURE 29. TOTAL REGIONAL EMPLOYEES AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL REGIONAL EMPLOYEES BY INDUSTRY | SOURCE: IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

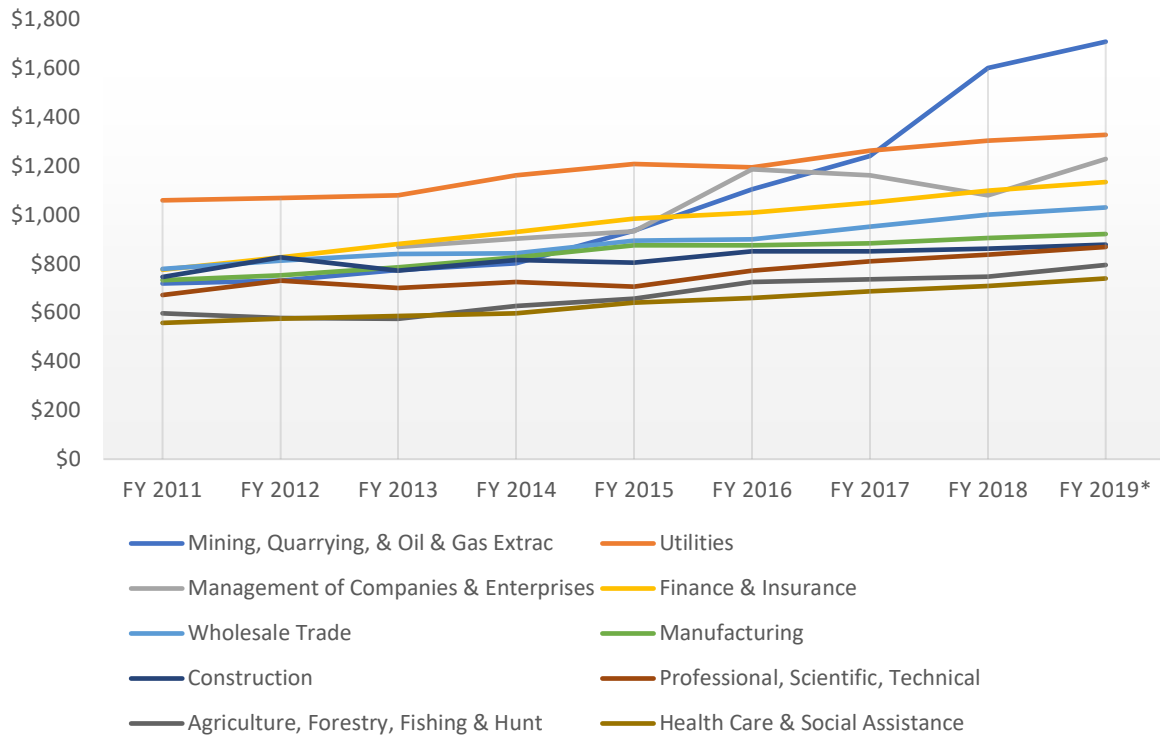


FIGURE 30. AVERAGE REGIONAL WAGE BY INDUSTRY (TOP TEN) | SOURCE: IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | *ONE OR MORE VALUES WAS IMPUTED DUE TO DATA LIMITATIONS

The graph above shows the average regional wage by industry for the top ten industries. In general, wages have grown. For some industries this growth was slow, for others, it was fast. Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction had the fastest growth and the highest average weekly wage. This industry was followed by Utilities, Management of Companies and Enterprises, and Finance and Insurance. Wholesale trade rounds out the top five and is the last industry with weekly wages over \$1,000.

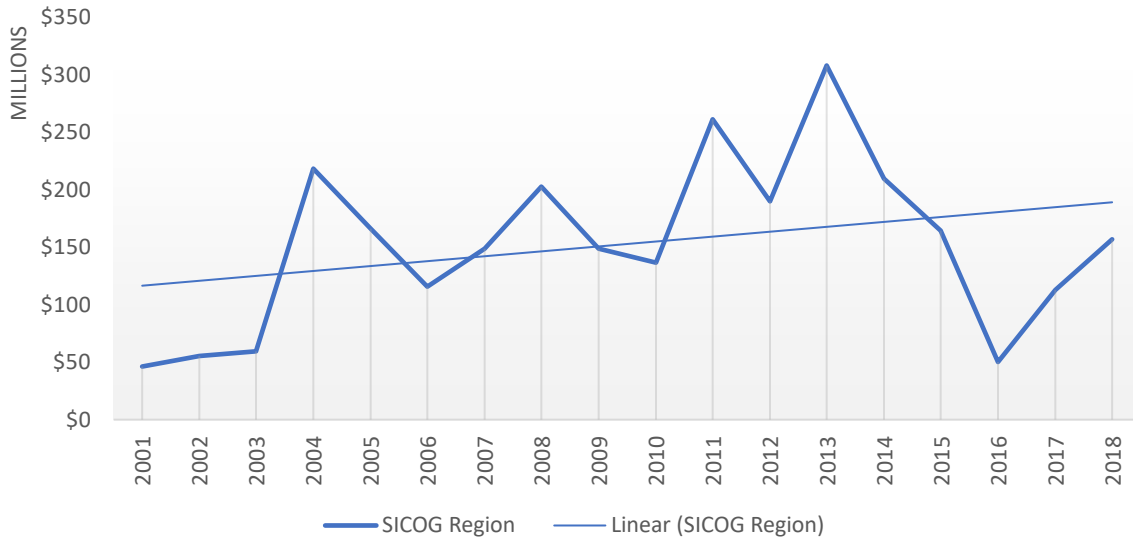


FIGURE 31. TOTAL REGIONAL FARM EARNINGS | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Since the SICOG region, and Iowa overall, is held steady by a farm economy, it is important to consider its health. The figure above displays the total regional farm earnings along with a linear that shows the general growth of farm earnings in the region. Since the turn of the century, farm earnings have generally grown but have experienced multiple peaks and valleys. The most prominent peak occurred in 2013 and was followed almost immediately by the most prominent valley that began in 2014 and ended in 2016. Since 2016, farm earnings have increased back to 2010 levels. It appears that farm earnings have recovered but given the volatility of the statistic, this may be untrue.

The same statistic, broken into the counties, is shown below.

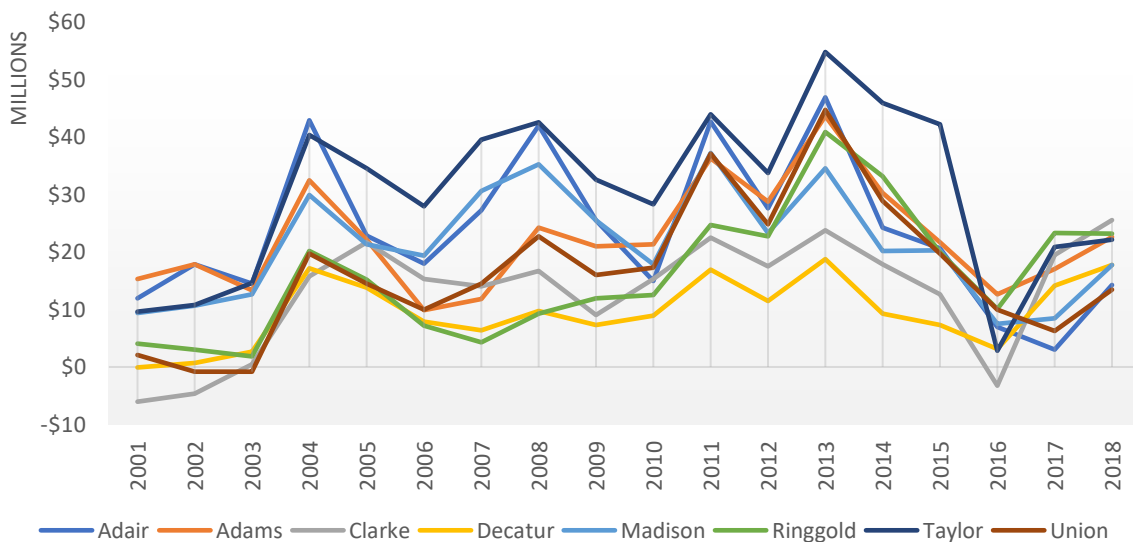


FIGURE 32. TOTAL REGIONAL FARM EARNINGS BY COUNTY | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

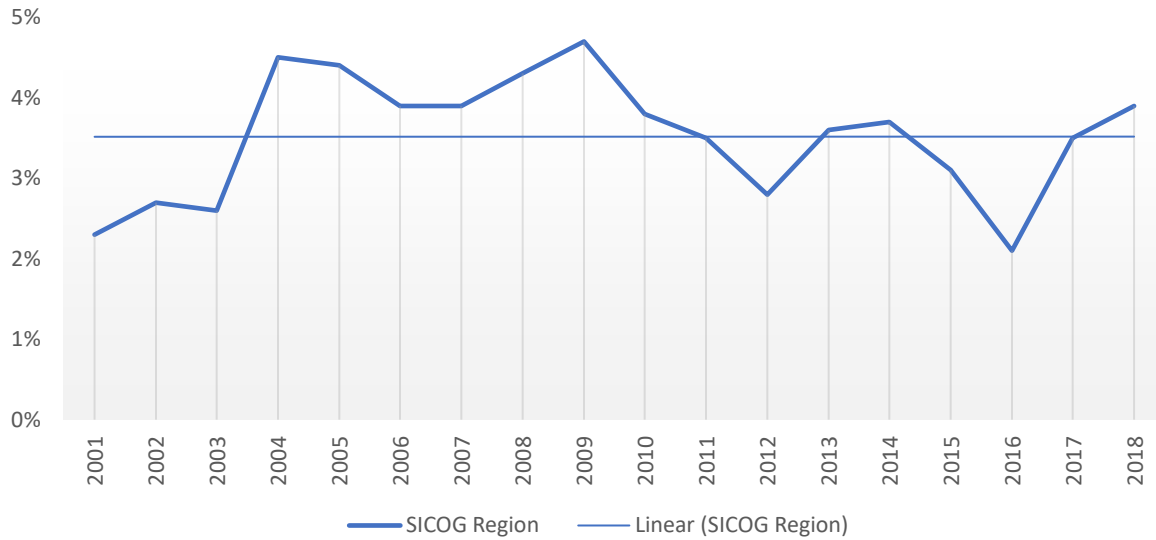


FIGURE 33. TOTAL REGIONAL FARM EARNINGS AS A PERCENT OF STATEWIDE FARM EARNINGS | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

It is important to consider how the SICOG region’s farm earnings have contributed to statewide farm earnings in order to gauge its growth relative to the average. The chart above shows the total regional farm earnings as a percent of statewide farm earnings. The region has remained within two to five percent of total statewide farm earnings since 2001 with an average of about 3.5 percent. This could indicate that there have not been any large permanent shocks to the system since the beginning of this data.

The same statistic, broken into the counties, is shown below.

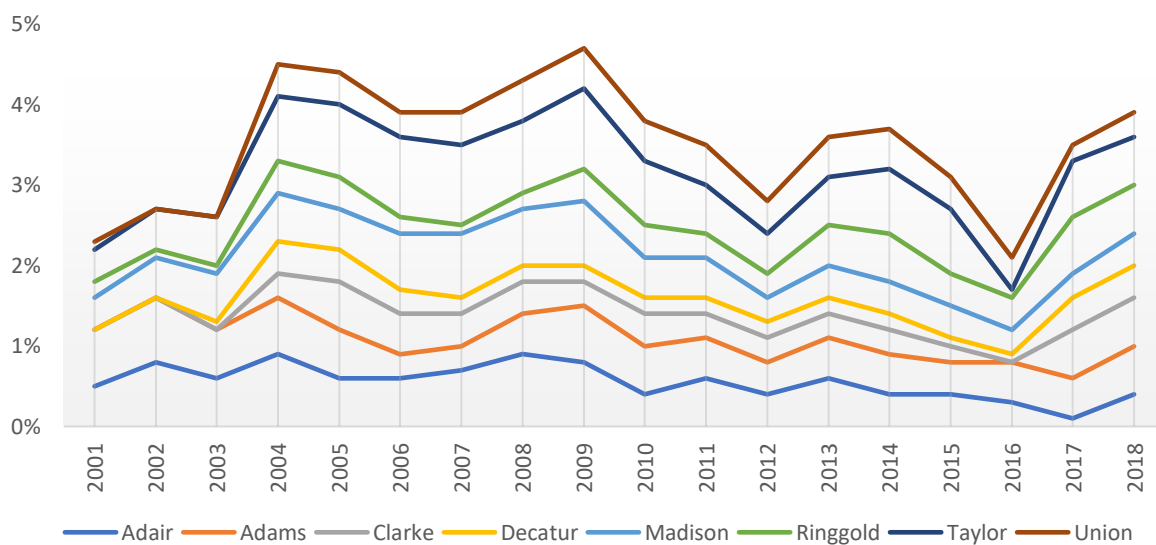


FIGURE 34. TOTAL REGIONAL FARM EARNINGS AS A PERCENT OF STATEWIDE FARM EARNINGS BY COUNTY | SOURCE: US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

HOUSING STOCK AND LAND VALUES

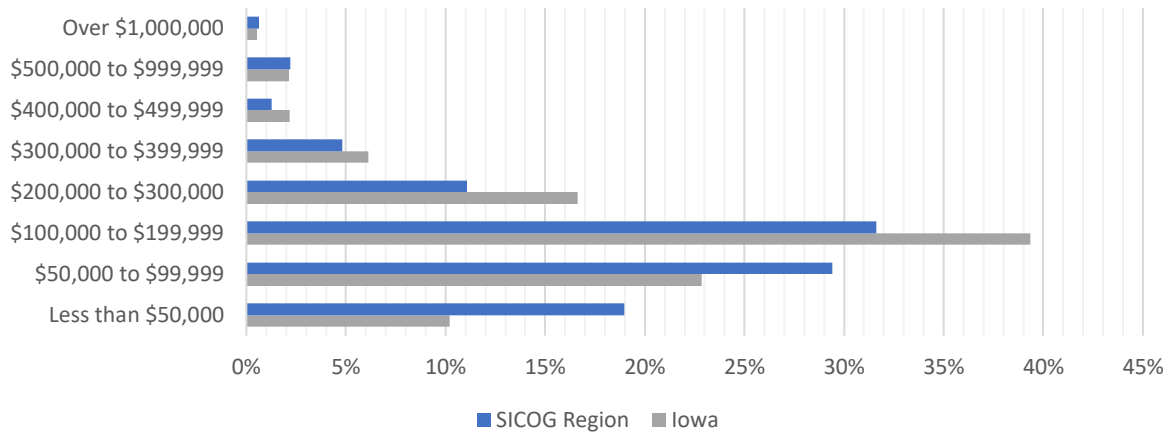


FIGURE 35. REGIONAL HOUSING VALUES COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

Regional housing and land values are very important to the regional economy as they are commonly a basis for loans and because a higher valued housing stock in a community is more attractive for employers who are looking to locate in the area and need quality housing for their employees. The chart above compares the housing values of the SICOG region with the State of Iowa overall. The distribution of the housing values for both geographies peak between \$100,000 and \$200,000. However, there is a much larger percentage of housing values below \$100,000 in the SICOG region than Iowa but there is a higher percentage of housing valued between \$100,000 and \$300,000 across the state.

The chart below shows the median housing value by county in the region compared the State of Iowa overall. Madison County is the only county in the region that exceeds the state overall. This graph is also very similar to the median household income chart (Figure X on page X).

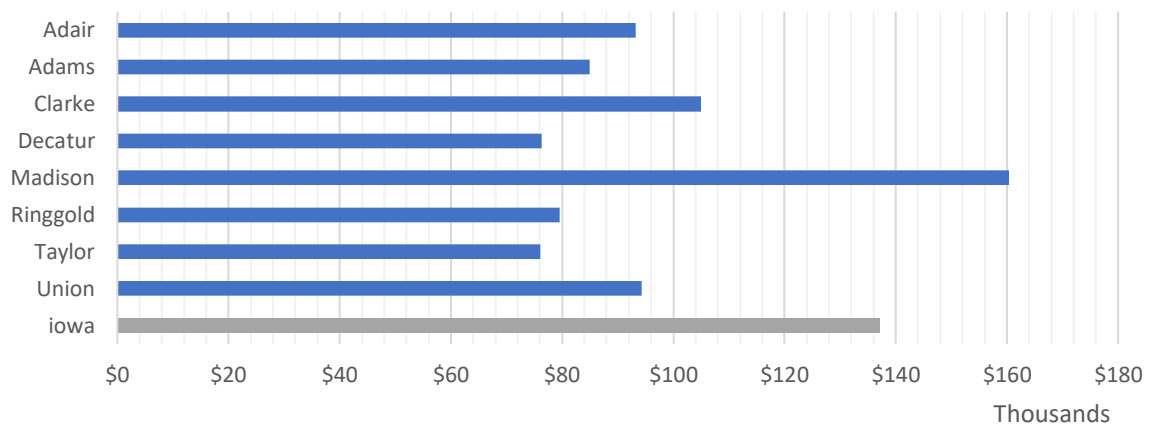


FIGURE 36. MEDIAN HOUSING VALUES BY COUNTY COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU 2018

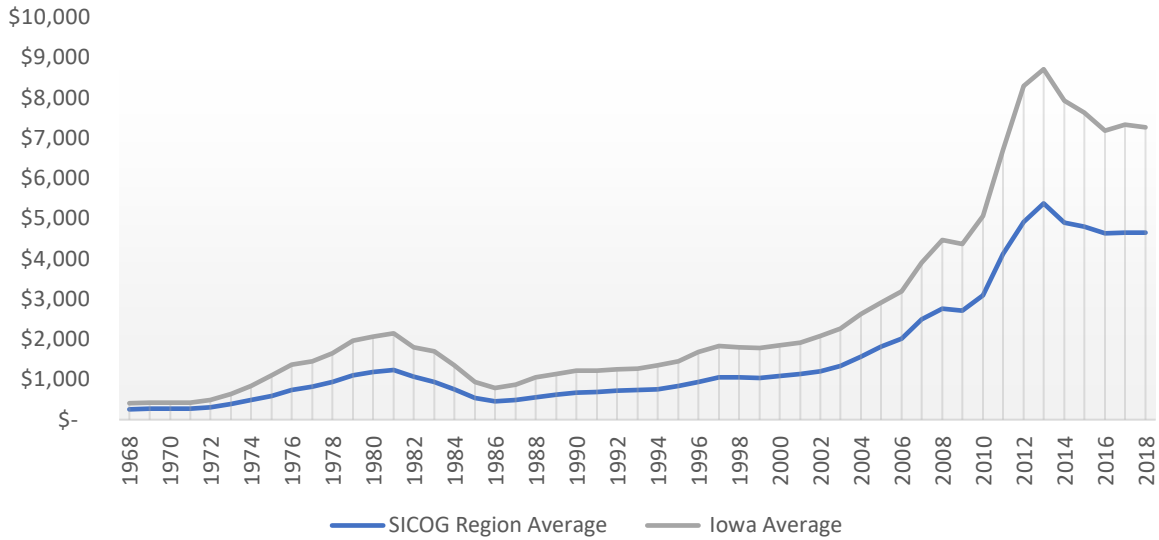


FIGURE 37. AGRICULTURAL LAND VALUES COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The chart above shows the agricultural land values in the SICO region compared to the State of Iowa average. As seen, the agricultural land values in this region, as well as Southern Iowa in general, are significantly lower. This leads to a smaller economy in the region since Iowa economies are farm-based. Therefore, if the farmland values are lower, the economy is smaller.

The chart below shows the average agricultural land values in each of the SICO counties compared to the State of Iowa average. Adair and Madison have the highest values in the region while Decatur and Clarke have the lowest. Decatur County, in particular, has the lowest agricultural land values in the entire state. All counties in the SICO region are at least \$1,000 below the state average.

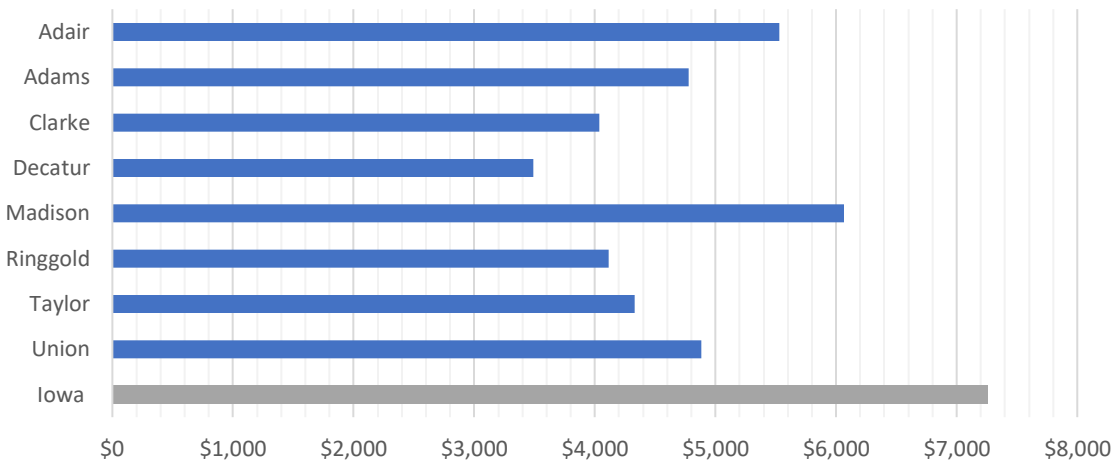


FIGURE 38. AVERAGE LAND VALUES BY COUNTY COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The age of the housing stock in the region is very important to consider as it can serve as an indication of the condition and quality of housing. Older houses usually require more maintenance than newer houses, which increases the costs associated with owning homes. This may dissuade potential homeowners from investing in a new home and steer them towards rental housing. Generally, houses that are renter-occupied instead of owner-occupied become dilapidated more quickly and as a result, have lower values. In the chart to the right, the age of the housing stock in the SICOG region is compared to the State of Iowa overall. In the SICOG region, a higher percentage of all housing units were built before 1940. This means that about 36 percent of housing units in the SICOG region are at least 80 years old. These units undoubtedly have higher maintenance costs associated with them.

The median age of the housing stock of the SICOG region, broken into counties, is compared to the State of Iowa in the table below. Two counties, Madison and Ringgold, have lower median housing ages than the State of Iowa. One county, Clarke, has an equal median housing age. The rest of the counties have higher median housing ages.

<i>Geography</i>	<i>Median Age</i>
Adair	62
Adams	77
Clarke	52
Decatur	55
Madison	49
Ringgold	50
Taylor	66
Union	61
Iowa	52

FIGURE 40. MEDIAN AGE OF HOUSING STOCK BY COUNTY COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

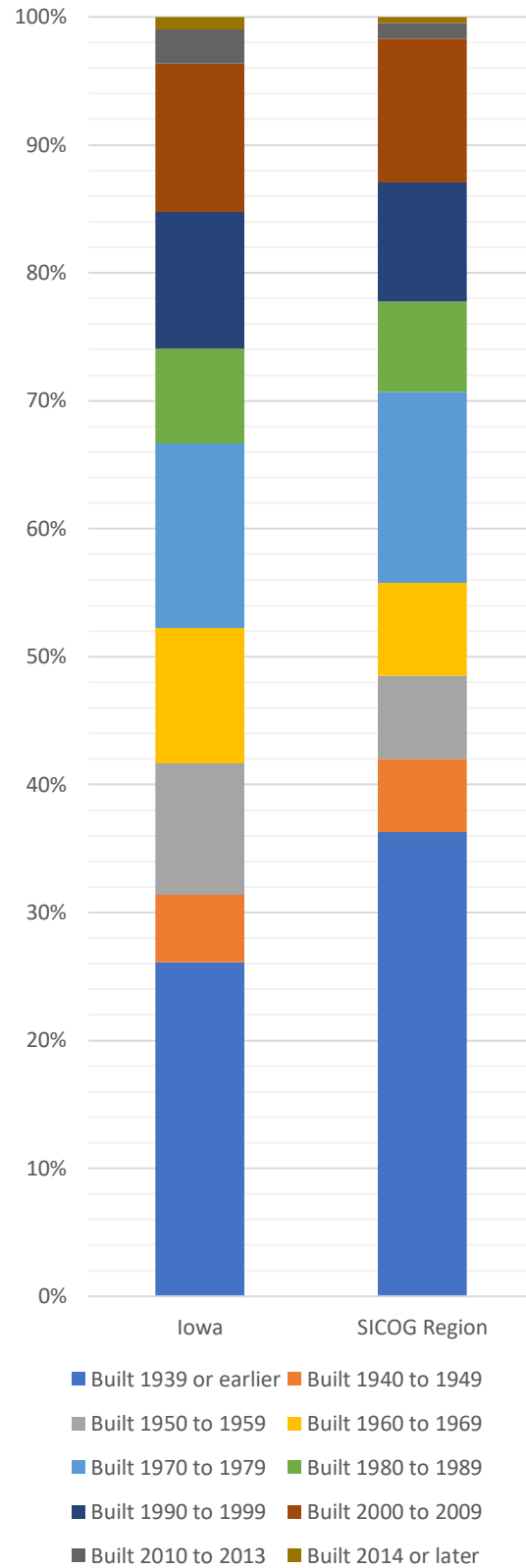


FIGURE 39. AGE OF HOUSING STOCK COMPARED TO THE STATE OF IOWA | SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

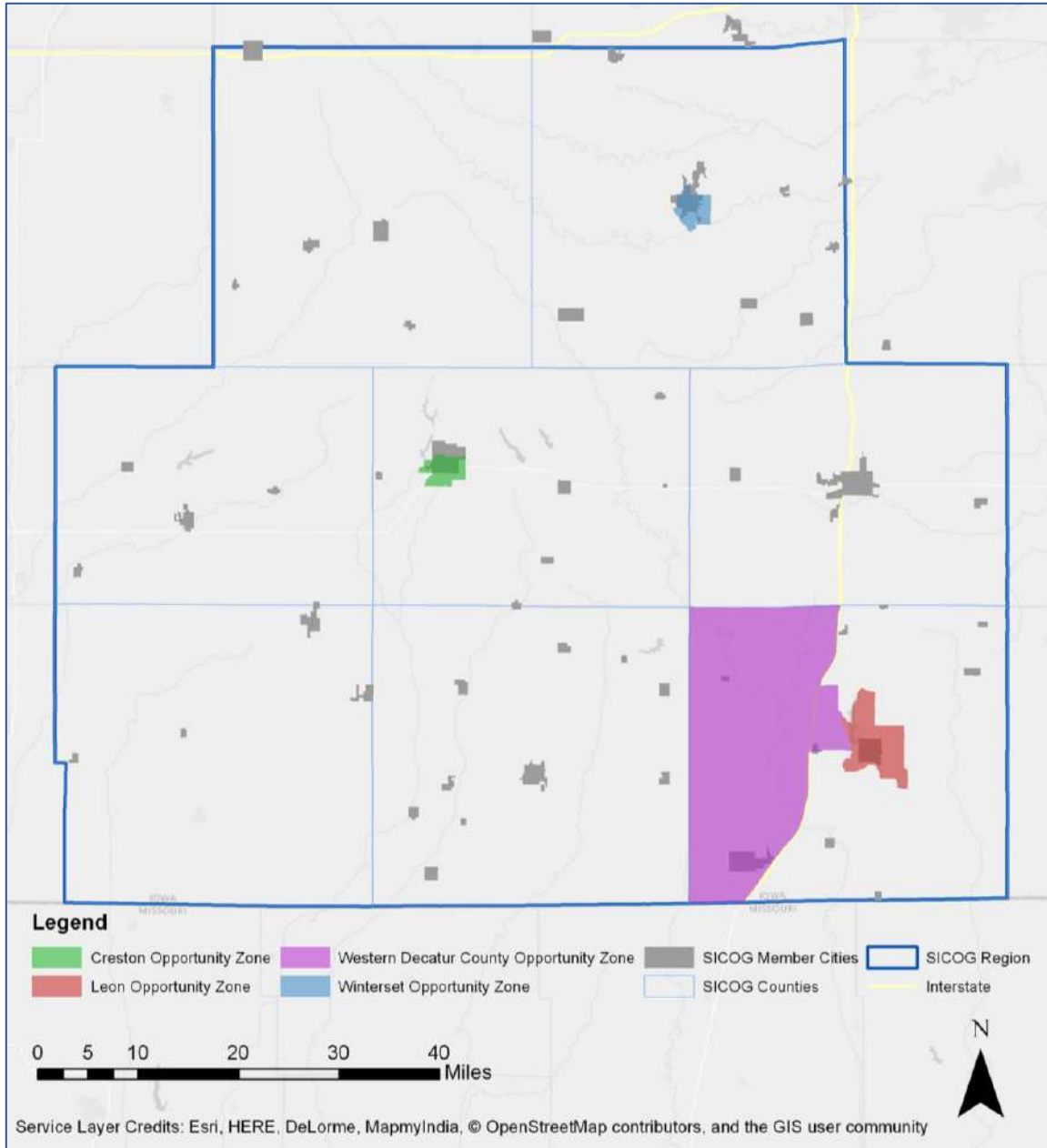


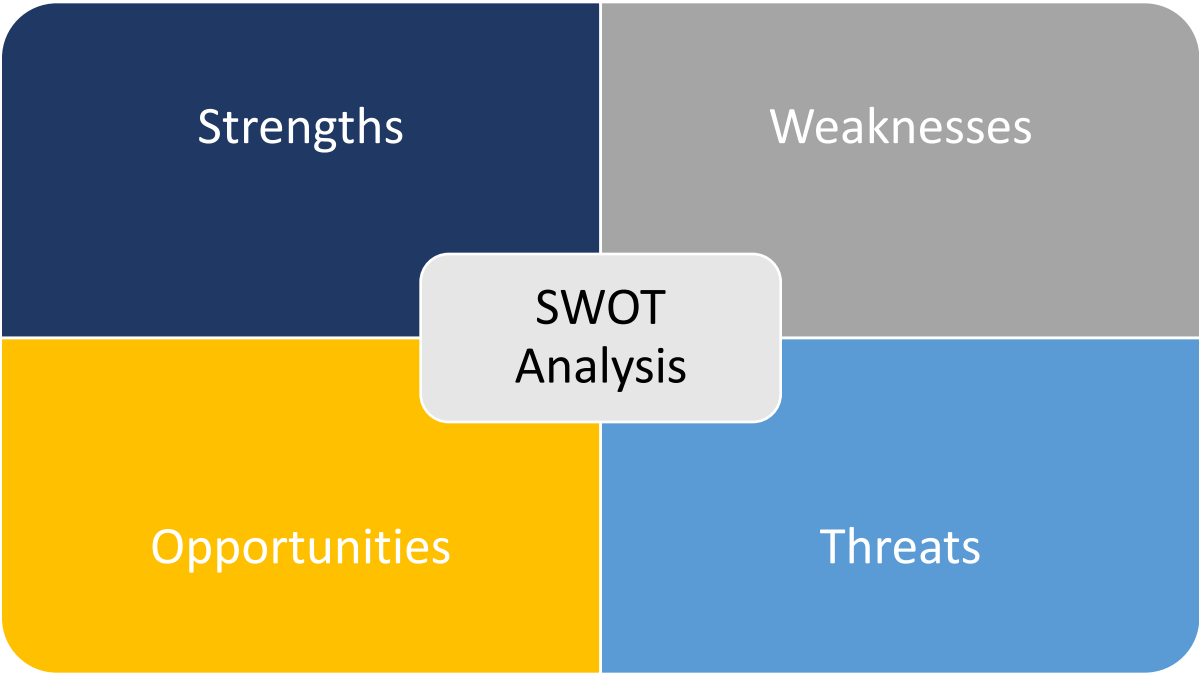
FIGURE 41. OPPORTUNITY ZONES IN THE SICOG REGION | SOURCE: IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

An Opportunity Zone is a designation given to communities that are considered “economically-distressed.” These zones were created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which was signed into law in December of that year. There are almost 9,000 Qualified Opportunity Zones located in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and five US territories. These zones allow private investments in the designated communities to be eligible for a temporary deferral on their capital gains taxes if they hold their investment in the community for at least five years. If the private investors hold their investment in the community for ten years, they are eligible for a permanent exclusion from capital gains taxes on the dollars used for that investment. More information can be found at <https://opportunityzones.hud.gov/>.

There are four Opportunity Zones in the SICOG region. They are seen on the previous page (Figure 41). Two of the Opportunity Zones are located in Decatur County while the other two are located in Union County (part of Creston) and Madison County (part of Winterset). Of the two zones in Decatur County, one covers all of Leon and its surrounding area and the other covers almost the entire western half of the county using Interstate-35 as most of the boundary line. This second zone covers the entirety of Lamoni, Grand River, and Decatur City. So far, there has been little success in gaining quality investment in these areas. As technical assistance from the state and federal government begins to become more readily available, this may change.

The hope of this designation is to incentivize investment from the private sector into disadvantaged communities. It will certainly be a priority of SICOG and other partners to ensure the success of these communities by utilizing this new tool.

SWOT ANALYSIS AND PRIORITIES



STRENGTHS

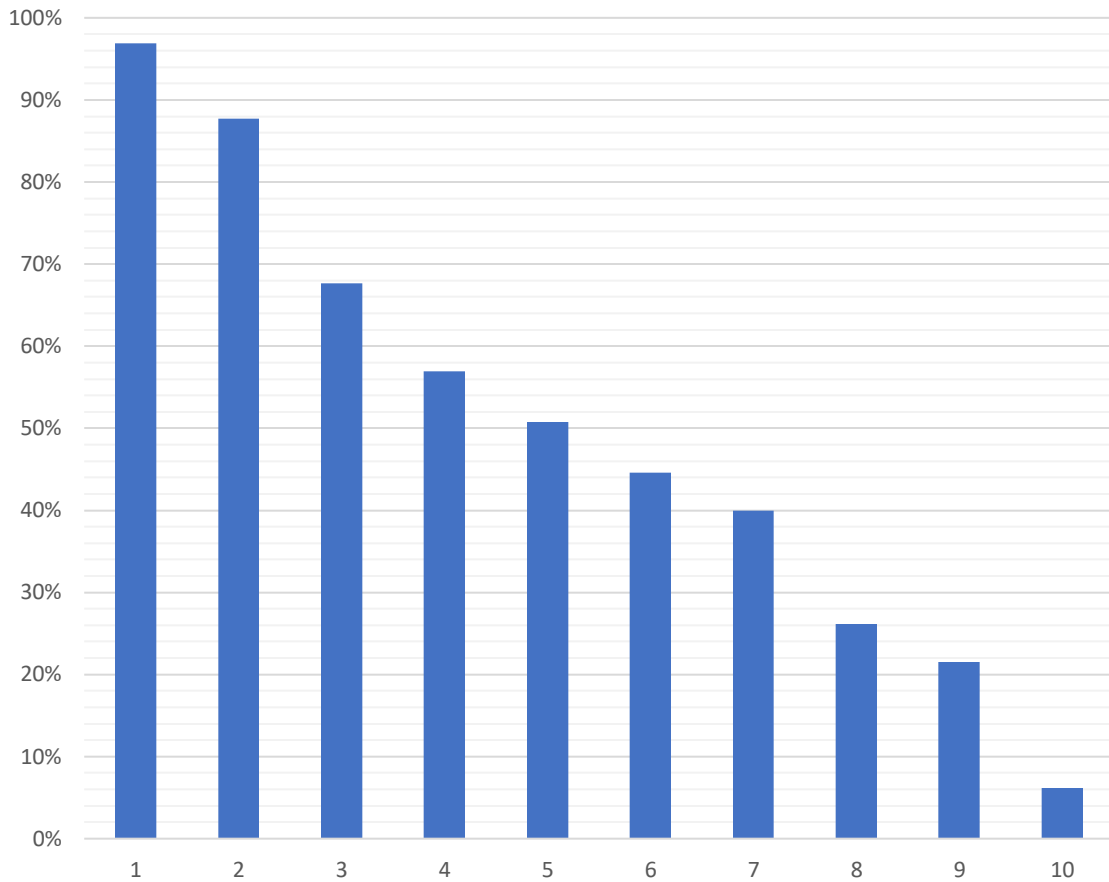


FIGURE 42. PERCEPTION OF REGIONAL STRENGTHS | SOURCE 2020 CEDS SURVEY

Number	Description
1	Quality of Life - small town friendliness (you know your neighbors and they help each other)
2	Safe place to live
3	Natural resources attract outsiders (lakes, hunting, camping, etc.)
4	Quality educational facilities
5	Agriculture related industry, jobs, and resources
6	Central US geographical location (near I-80 and I-35); Proximity to larger markets & access to resources in Des Moines, Omaha & Kansas City
7	Low housing costs
8	Desirable wind energy location
9	Diversity of jobs - not dependent on just one type of industry
10	Others (please specify)

PERCEPTION OF STRENGTHS

In our CEDS survey, we asked the question “What strengths best describe your area?” and gave ten options including *Other* with space to specify. Almost 97 percent of respondents to the survey agreed that the *quality of life, the small-town friendliness and helpfulness* of the region is its biggest strength. This is followed by *safe place to live* (88 percent), and *natural resources attract outsiders* (68 percent). Most respondents agreed that *quality educational facilities* and *agriculture related industry, jobs, and resources* were also strengths in the region. Less than half of respondents agreed that all other options listed were regional strengths.

ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS

From an objective standpoint, the public perception is largely reflective of the current condition of the region and will be important to the vision of the comprehensive economic development strategy. Utilizing the data from the summary background, it can be seen that major strengths are largely not quantifiable due to the structural economic disadvantages that the region faces (low farmland values in an agriculture-based state economy, sparse populations, lack of robust private sector industries). So, the more qualitative attributes that are more easily perceivable, such as quality of life, safety, and quality educational facilities, stand out more and become more important to the regional economy.

As is true for many regions that are largely composed of rural land and small towns, natural resources and agriculture are vital for the economy. In many regions, including the SICOG region, this primary-producer economy permeates into the social economy of the region. For this region, farmland values are low due to the soil quality. This results in fewer cash crops, more land used as pasture for cattle, and less profitable farm enterprises. Therefore, natural resources related to hunting, fishing, and general outdoor recreation are more prevalent and are where the region excels compared to many places in the country.

The geographic location of the region is certainly important to note, however, transportation infrastructure into the center of the region from nearby metropolitan areas is largely missing or inefficient, which causes travel times, shipping costs, and emissions to be much higher. Transportation to the edges of the region are serviced by two interstates that run west and south out of Des Moines to Omaha and Kansas City but smaller Federal Highways and State Highways are the only connections to the largest city in the region, Creston.

WEAKNESSES

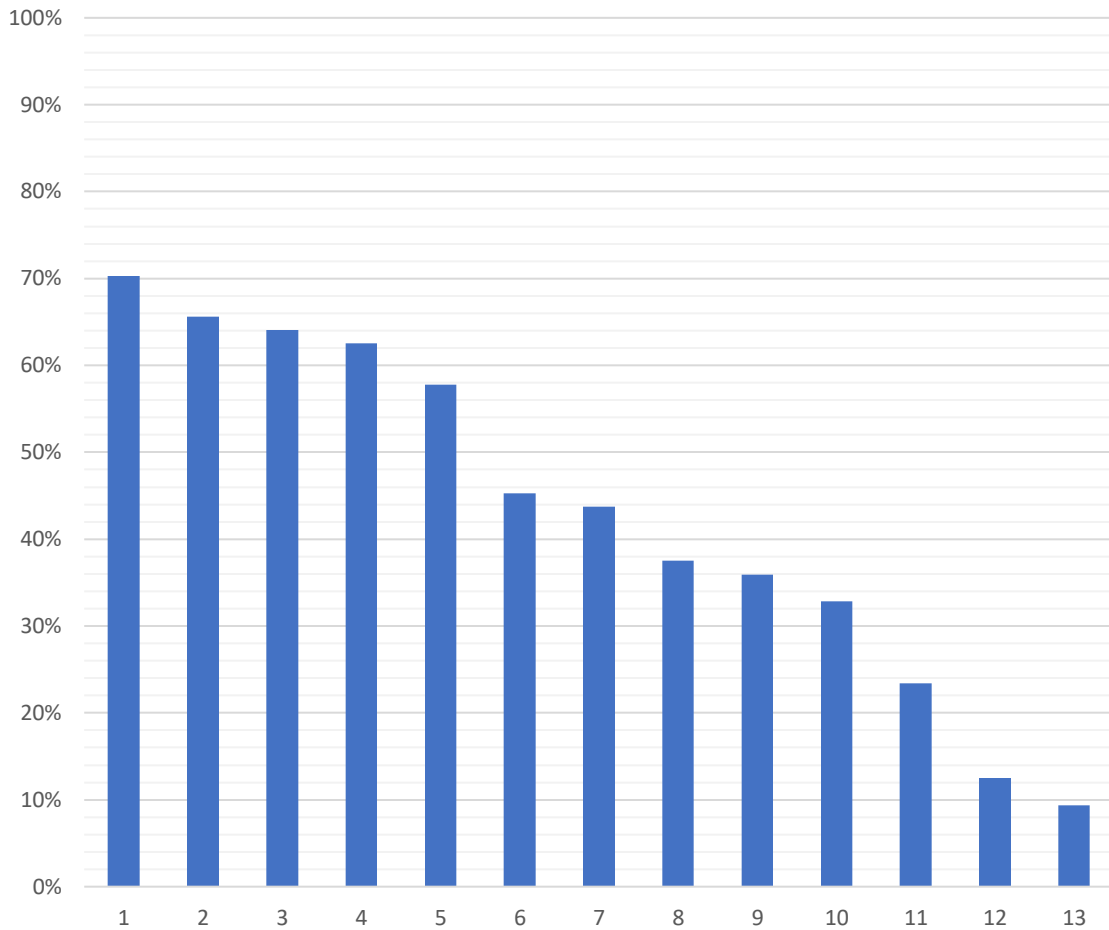


FIGURE 43. PERCEPTION OF REGIONAL WEAKNESS | SOURCE: 2020 CEDS SURVEY

Number	Description
1	Older, poorly maintained housing stock; lack of newer, quality affordable housing
2	Lack of funding to maintain existing infrastructure or to build new infrastructure
3	Aging residents & declining population
4	Limited entertainment and activities for young people
5	Low wages do not retain young workers in the area; Brain drain
6	Relative lack of skilled and "middle skills" workforce
7	Aging professionals and business owners resulting in business closures
8	Resistance to change and new decision-makers
9	High rate of poverty
10	High property taxes
11	High cost of water/sewer utilities
12	Others (please specify)
13	Lack of public administration capacity

PERCEPTION OF WEAKNESSES

The option agreed upon by most respondents in the 2020 SICOG CEDS survey was *older, poorly maintained housing stock; lack of newer, quality affordable housing*. This option gathered over 70 percent support from respondents. This was followed by *lack of funding to maintain existing infrastructure or to build new infrastructure, aging residents & declining population*, and *limited entertainment and activities for young people*. These three weaknesses were agreed upon by 66, 64, and 63 percent of respondents, respectively. The only other weakness with over 50 percent concurrence in was *low wages do not retain young workers in the area; brain drain*.

ANALYSIS OF WEAKNESSES

Again, perception received through the 2020 CEDS survey is largely supported by data. The housing stock of the region is older and poorly maintained for a variety of reasons. It is also very difficult to build newer housing that is affordable, especially in a sparsely populated region like this one. There is also a serious lack of funding to maintain and build new infrastructure throughout the region. This is partially due to a declining population and declining housing values, which lower property tax bases. Costs of maintenance and new infrastructure are also much higher now than in the past as well. There are grants available to assist communities with these issues, but they are very competitive.

The aging population is absolutely a problem that will create job openings but there may not be anyone to fill those vacancies due to brain drain. They will also need social services at a higher rate than before, which can be a tax burden on residents. The job vacancies created by the departure of older residents from the workforce will most likely not result in jobs with higher wages either, as wages in the region are lower than the statewide average. This is also a deterrent for young workers in the region, as they can very easily find jobs in one of the nearby metropolitan areas that pay higher wages. These metropolitan areas are also able to attract young workers away by having more entertainment options and amenities than the SICOG region.

Two major weaknesses of the region that were not listed are 1) a central geographic location and 2) a lack of diverse career opportunities. The first, a central geographic location, was previously mentioned in the strengths section. This issue could be considered both a strength and weakness of the region. While the region has proximity advantages by sitting between two major metropolitan areas and one semi-major metropolitan area, there is an inefficient transportation network connecting them. The region is also forced to compete with the metropolitan areas for young workers and new population. This leads into the second weakness: it is difficult to make a convincing argument for young people to move to the region instead of the metropolitan areas that have more diverse career opportunities and amenities due to their size.

OPPORTUNITIES

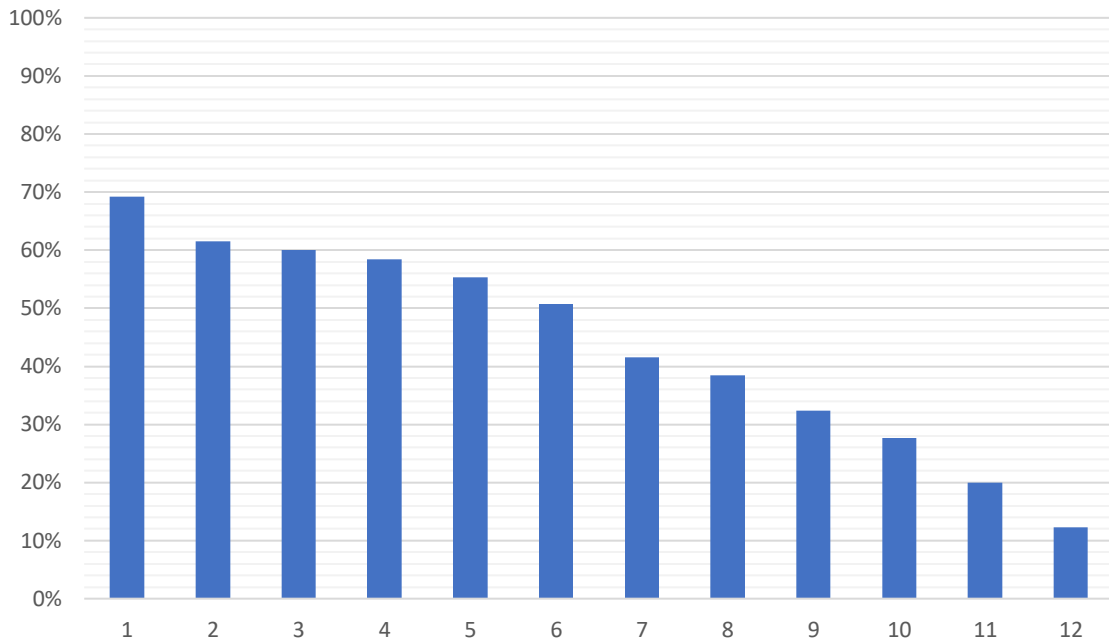


FIGURE 44. PERCEPTION OF REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES | SOURCE: 2020 CEDS SURVEY

Number	Description
1	Work with schools, counselors, and parents on variety of student career paths that will fill jobs in the future
2	Promote mid-level job training & vocational training opportunities
3	Expand our natural resource tourism (hunting, fishing, camping, sightseeing, etc.)
4	Work together with other counties, cities or organizations - encourage regionalism/economy of scale
5	Small businesses with aging proprietors create opportunities for young entrepreneurs; Succession planning
6	Take advantage of proximity to Des Moines, Omaha & Kansas City
7	Develop agriculture related technical jobs that utilize agriculture culture & knowledge
8	Business expansion in the healthcare or elder care services industries due to aging population
9	Expansion of "new agriculture" crop production and value-added agricultural products
10	Attract applicants for skilled, high-paying jobs that already exist here
11	Expand or create cluster of alternative/wind energy related manufacturing or services
12	Others (please specify)

PERCEPTION OF OPPORTUNITIES

The results of the 2020 SICOG CEDS survey show that most respondents agree that partnerships with educational institutions and business owners to train the future work force is an opportunity of which to take advantage. A majority (60 percent) of respondents also agreed that there is opportunity to expand natural resource tourism, such as hunting, fishing, and general outdoor recreation. Partnerships amongst other regional public entities and organizations also garnered 58 percent concurrence among respondents. Once again, proximity to Des Moines, Omaha, Kansas City was regarded as important to note. All other options garnered less than 50 percent agreement.

ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES

The perception of opportunities in the region is that they are mostly related to taking advantage of workforce training, expanding natural resource tourism, and taking advantage of the region's proximity to the Des Moines, Omaha, and Kansas City metropolitan areas. Each of these is a strong opportunity for the region and should certainly be used. Workforce training can be done through Southwestern Community College, which has campuses in Creston (Union County) and Osceola (Clarke County), and through partnerships with the local school districts and the local business leaders.

Natural resource tourism is perhaps the best opportunity for the region. The region has counties that are well known for having very good hunting grounds and fishing lakes. It also has more rolling hills and scenic topography than much of Iowa, due to the glacial movements that occurred in prehistory. This gives potential for the region to plan and build an expansive hiking and bike trail network that could connect the region, in a more immersive way that could benefit cities more than a vehicular transportation network expansion could. This system could also connect to the Des Moines metropolitan area, relatively easily, which would be taking advantage of the region's proximity to Des Moines. Future trail and natural resource tourism could be expanded to the other metropolitan areas but this would take increased collaboration between many other stakeholders.

An opportunity not recognized in previous paragraphs would be the railroads. There is a BNSF rail line that runs through the center of the region. Utilizing this rail line for multi-modal shipping is an opportunity that should be explored. Multi-modal facilities can also be explored to increase the economic benefit of this feature as well. Abandoned rail lines are also common in the region and are perfect locations for bike and walking trails.

THREATS

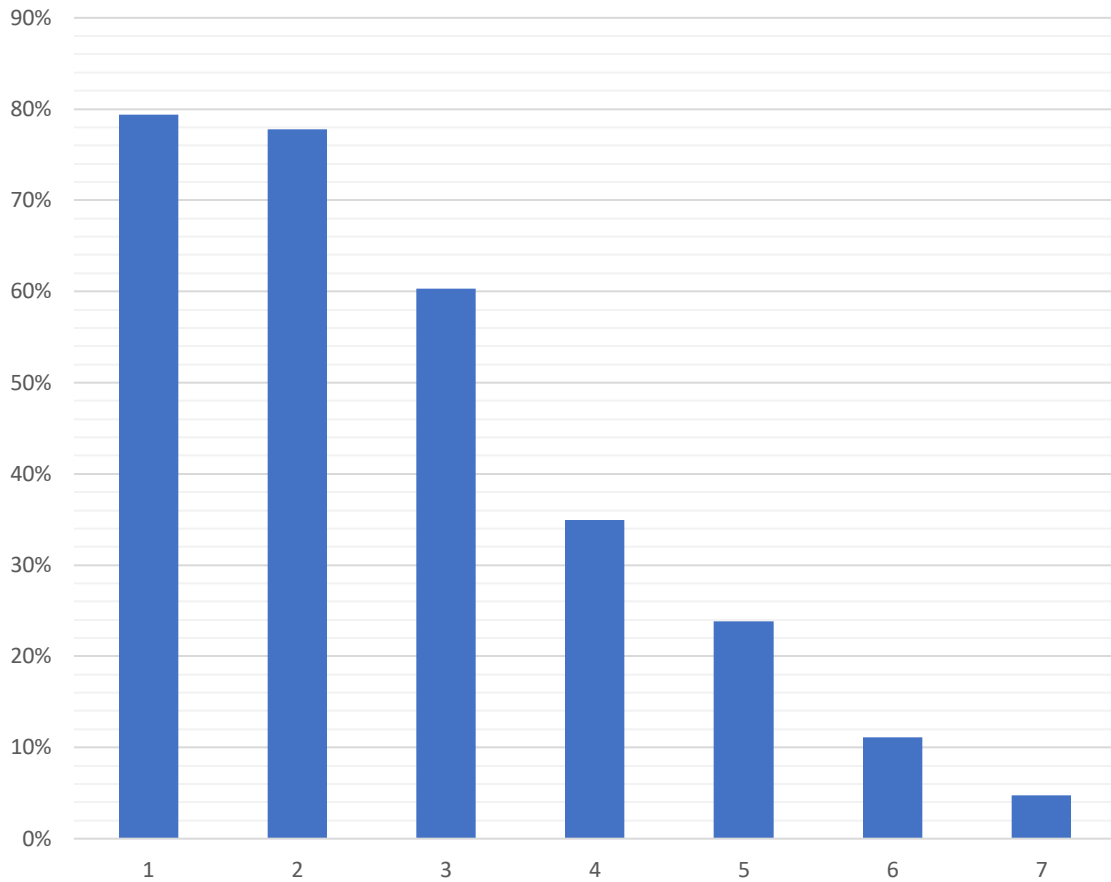


FIGURE 45. PERCEPTION OF REGIONAL THREATS | SOURCE: 2020 CEDS SURVEY

<i>Number</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Retail & entertainment centers outside the region pull people and their dollars away
2	Young workforce leaving for higher paying jobs in cities (population loss & brain drain)
3	Unfunded mandates & changes in tax base and tax laws that are detrimental to local government
4	Decline in grant resources that were once more abundant
5	Geographical location (not on a coast with convenient access to international shipping)
6	Others (please specify)
7	Insufficient water resources

PERCEPTION OF THREATS

The results of the 2020 SICOG CEDS survey show that the threats with the mutuality amongst a majority of respondents were *retail & entertainment centers outside the region pull people and their dollars away, young workforce leaving for higher paying jobs in cities, and unfunded mandates & changes in tax base and tax laws that are detrimental to local government*. Each of these gathered over 60 percent agreement. The rest of the options did not reach 40 percent agreement.

ANALYSIS OF THREATS

The perception of threats in the region are largely related to population loss. This is very true for a region that has been experiencing population loss since the turn of the 20th century, as seen in the background chapter. In the last three decades, the population of the region has leveled off indicating that an equilibrium may have been reached. This could very easily change, however, as technology advances and allows people and workers to live differently than before. This could mean more brain drain or it could mean a resurgence in small town and rural life depending on how culture and technology advance together.

A threat not mentioned is the decreasing quality of housing stock in the region. Housing is one of the most important components to any society. It is a quality of life factor that influences the social resilience of communities more than perhaps any other factor. Additionally, it has a huge impact on economic and environmental resilience. In order to attract economic development to the region, the region needs to have adequate workforce housing. Currently, the housing stock is a weakness, as seen previously, and with declining land values, it does not appear to be recovering or have many pathways to recovery.

Another threat not mentioned in this section but was lightly mentioned in other sections of this SWOT analysis is the industry make-up of the region. Like many rural areas in Iowa, and other states, the private sector economy is largely based on agriculture and manufacturing. These two industries are equally strengths and threats to the regional economy. The strength of these industries is that they are vital components of the national economy and are always necessary to varying extents. The threat of these industries is the region's dependence on these sectors. If large fluctuations, of any kind, occur in these industries, it will have major impacts on the region, which will likely permeate into other local industry. Additionally, these industries have very little room to grow, given the limitations of the region (poor soil and a set amount of land for agriculture and a lack of workers to expand operations for manufacturing).

SWOT SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

The region has many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A summary of these components are as follows:

The perception of strengths of the region include the quality of life, the safety of communities, natural resources, the educational facilities, and the agricultural industry. These are all largely confirmed by statistics, however, the qualitative features, such as quality of life, safety, and education facilities, are difficult to measure and may not be true for all residents of the region. Perhaps the biggest strength of the region, the abundance of natural resources that can be used for tourism or outdoor recreation also has the most room to grow and the most opportunity to impact the economic, social, and environmental resilience of the region. Other strengths, such as the agriculture industry and the geographic location of the region, are also weaknesses, opportunities, or threats as well.

The perception of weaknesses of the region include the housing stock, the cost and lack of funding to maintain and build new infrastructure, aging residents, limited entertainment options to young people, and low wages. All of these can be confirmed by statistics and price measures. The biggest weakness of the region, the housing stock, is also one of the most challenging, as land values in the region are not increasing in most cases, which depresses the financial capacity to invest in housing. Additionally, since the incomes of residents in the area are lower than the State of Iowa on average, newer, affordable housing is difficult to find or build. Other weaknesses include geographic location of the region, an inefficient transportation network, and a lack of diverse career opportunities, which is a contributor to population loss.

The perception of opportunities in the region include utilizing resources to train the workforce in the region to better fit the needs of the career opportunities available. This includes creating partnerships and programs with the local community college, high schools, and business owners. Once again, proximity to Des Moines, Omaha, and Kansas City was recognized as an opportunity. This could be taken advantage of very easily and successfully through regional trail planning and transportation network enhancements along with other natural resource tourism. The utilization of the BSNF railroad line that runs through the center of the region is also a significant opportunity to spur economic development in the region.

The perception of threats in the region include retail and entertainment centers outside the region, which pulls business away from local retailers, population loss, and tax laws. These are all reasonable threats to the region and should be addressed. Other threats to the region include the decreasing quality of housing in the region, which is vital for recruiting new firms and maintaining a high quality of life for residents and the over dependence of the regional economy on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

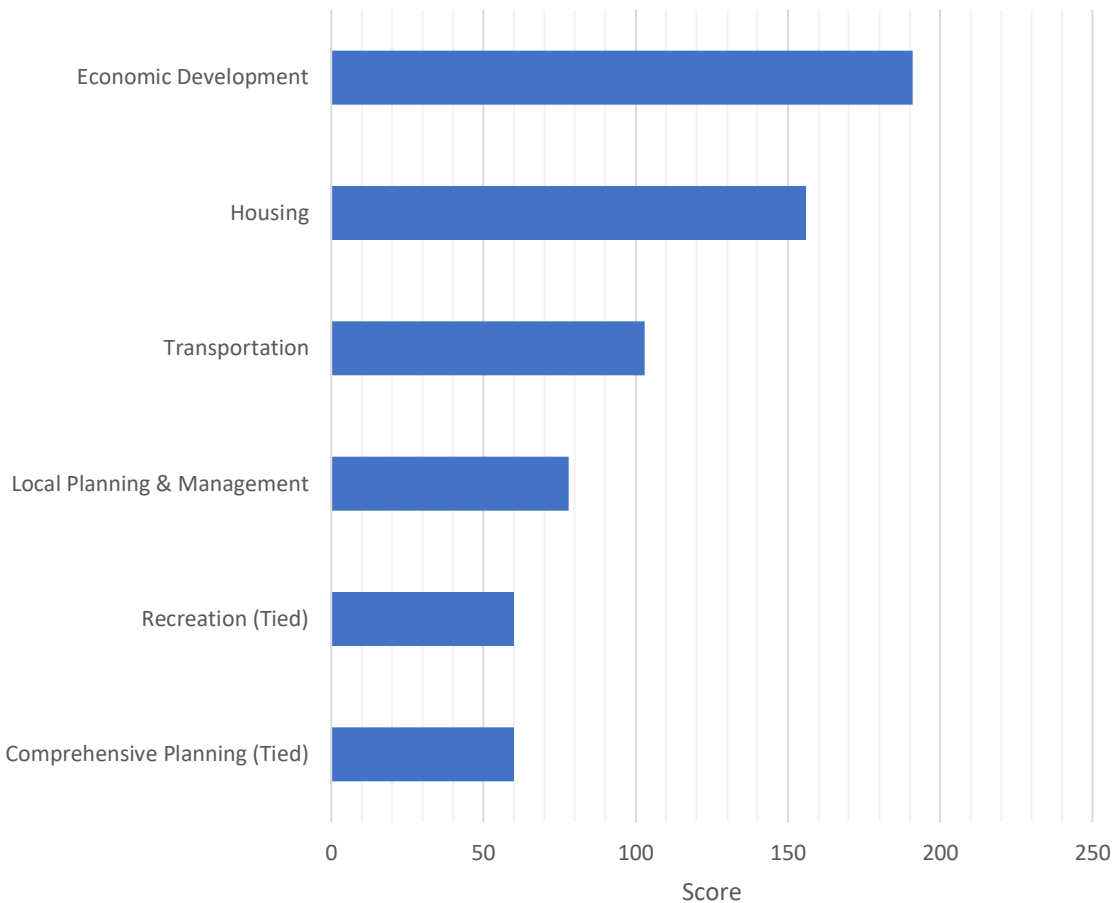


FIGURE 46: REGIONAL PRIORITIES | SOURCE: 2020 CEDS SURVEY

The graph above displays the top five priorities of the 2020 SICOG CEDS survey respondents. The total number of respondents for this survey was just under 60. The scores were calculated in the following way:

The first priority of a respondent was given a score of five, the second priority was given a score of four, the third priority was given a score of three, the fourth priority was given a score of two, and the fifth priority was given a score of 1.

Economic development, housing, and transportation finished first, second, and third respectively. They were followed by *Local Planning & Management* then *Recreation* and *Comprehensive Planning* tied for fifth. This ranking is not unexpected as the only priority that is new to the top five is *Comprehensive Planning*. All other categories were in the top five in the previous year and the top four have been in those positions for the last five years with some switching in the past two years.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/ACTION PLAN



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

VISION

The mission of SICOG is to provide and coordinate community and economic development services primarily through the delivery of planning services, technical program assistance, grant writing, and grant administration to assist local governments and others in their efforts to improve the social and economic well-being of its eight-county service area.

The goals of SICOG are to:

- Promote community and economic development;
- Serve as an advocate for the region;
- Provide a forum for common concerns and issues;
- Maximize resources;
- Promote and encourage leadership development;
- Use the best technologies and practices; and
- Provide skilled professional staff.

GOALS

Using the SICOG mission statement/goals, the 2020 CEDS survey, and various statistics, the following goals were established for the 2020 SICOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:

- Improve and maintain the quality of life for residents in the region
- Improve economic resilience
- Promote regional collaboration
- Improve environmental resilience

ACTION PLAN

KEY:

SCHEDULES

Ongoing: A continuing effort that occurs throughout the life of this strategy

Short: Start and finish within one or two years of adoption

Medium: Start and finish within five years of adoption

Long: Start within five years but finish after five years

ACRONYMS

ATURA: Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA 14) serving the counties of Adair, Taylor, Union, Ringgold, and Adams

CIRTPA: Central Iowa Regional Transportation Affiliate

CVTPA: Chariton Valley Transportation Planning Affiliation serving the counties of Appanoose, Clarke, Davis, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, and Wayne

HUD: United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

IDOT: Iowa Department of Transportation

IDNR: Iowa Department of Natural Resources

IEDA: Iowa Economic Development Authority

IDALS: Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

IFA: Iowa Finance Authority

IWD: Iowa Workforce Development

MATURA: Designated Community Action Agency for the counties of Madison, Adams, Taylor, Union, Ringgold, and Adair

NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service

RC & D: Resource Conservation and Development

SCICAP: Designated Community Action Agency for the counties of Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, and Wayne in South Central Iowa

SICOG: Southern Iowa Council of Governments

SIRHA: Southern Iowa Regional Housing Authority

SIRWA: Southern Iowa Regional Water Authority

SIT: Southern Iowa Trolley

SWCC: Southwestern Community College

US EDA: United State Economic Development Administration

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture

GOAL 1: IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS IN THE REGION

Quality of life can have many different definitions and can include a variety of quantitative and qualitative factors. Lexico defines quality of life as *the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experience by an individual or group*. These three broad components (health, comfort, and happiness) can be heavily influenced by the actions of all levels of government (local, state, federal). Improving and maintaining these components can very positively impact the economic development potential of a region by creating desirable living conditions for residents. Therefore, the following are objectives in the goal of improving and maintaining the quality of life for residents in the region:

- Improve regional transportation assets
- Improve and expand regional recreational assets
- Improve the regional housing stock

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Explore and implement transportation enhancement/improvement projects</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; ATURA; CIRTPA; CVTPA; IDOT; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce	Medium
<i>Explore and implement multi-modal transportation projects</i>		Long
<i>Explore and implement streetscaping projects</i>		Long

OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE AND EXPAND REGIONAL RECREATIONAL ASSETS

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Identify and evaluate key recreational assets</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce	Medium
<i>Create and implement regional recreation plans</i>		Long
<i>Promote and assist the development of individual recreational asset plans</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE THE REGIONAL HOUSING STOCK

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Evaluate housing conditions in cities and counties</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; IEDA, IFA, USDA	Short
<i>Apply for and administer housing grants</i>		Medium
<i>Expand regional development capacity, including builders, financing, and investors</i>		Medium
<i>Market, evaluate, and expand the services of the Southern Iowa COG Housing Trust Fund</i>	SICOG	Ongoing
<i>Market the services of the Southern Iowa Development Group</i>	SICOG	Ongoing

GOAL 2: IMPROVE REGIONAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Economic resilience in a system, such as a regional economy, can be defined in two ways. The first of which is *the ability of a system to withstand external shocks to and return to its equilibrium*. The second definition is *the ability of a system to suffer an external shock and adapt to a new equilibrium*. The first definition is more appropriate for static systems with fewer dynamic components. The second definition is more appropriate for a system with almost unlimited dynamic components, such as a regional economy. Therefore, the following are objectives in the goal of improving regional economic resilience:

- Support and strengthen existing businesses
- Facilitate an environment that is inviting to new businesses
- Encourage diversification of the regional industrial mix
- Support projects that have potential to capitalize on competitive advantages of the region
- Develop an educational/training system that supports the regional economy
- Take advantage of the Opportunity Zones in the region

OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN EXISTING BUSINESSES

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Develop an outreach program targeting regional industries to assess the current and future needs of businesses including ownership transition</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; Local Business Owners/Operators; IWD	Medium
<i>Conduct trade leakage studies</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; IWD	Long
<i>Market, evaluate, and expand the services of Southern Iowa Development Group</i>	SICOG	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 2: FACILITATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS INVITING TO NEW BUSINESSES

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Support institutions, programs, and initiatives that encourage new business development</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; Local Business Owners/Operators; IWD	Ongoing
<i>Provide technical assistance to regarding tax and zoning codes that encourage new business development</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce	Ongoing
<i>Enhance quality of life factors in the region</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3: ENCOURAGE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL MIX

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Identify resources to support industry clusters and research emerging industry trends</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; IEDA; IWD	Short
<i>Improve access to small business development resources and incubators</i>		Medium
<i>Conduct market studies to identify business opportunities</i>		Long
<i>Identify and pursue grant funding to support entrepreneurial development</i>		Ongoing
<i>Encourage public-private partnerships to identify business opportunities</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 4: SUPPORT PROJECTS THAT HAVE POTENTIAL TO CAPITALIZE ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE REGION

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Identify and evaluate specific current advantages of the region economically, socially, and environmentally</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; Local Business Owners/Operators; IDNR	Short
<i>Promote and support the formation of industry clusters within developed and emerging industries</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; Local Business Owners/Operators	Ongoing
<i>Promote and support projects which support resource-based industries in the region</i>		Ongoing
<i>Promote and support a regional trail system</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; IDNR	Ongoing
<i>Promote and support natural resource protection</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 5: DEVELOP AN EDUCATIONAL/TRAINING SYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Evaluate the regional economy to determine workforce needs</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; IEDA; IWD; SWCC; Local School Districts	Short
<i>Develop a curriculum that supports the regional economy</i>		Long
<i>Develop an internship/apprenticeship program for local students</i>		Long
<i>Research emerging industry trends and related workforce needs</i>		Ongoing
<i>Research and pursue grant opportunities to fund workforce development</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 6: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY ZONES IN THE REGION

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Develop a regional prospectus to market Opportunity Zones</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; Local Business Owners/Operators; US EDA; HUD; IEDA	Short
<i>Increase regional knowledge of the functionality of Opportunity Zones in the region</i>		Ongoing
<i>Develop partnerships to utilize Opportunity Zones</i>		Ongoing
<i>Assist communities in management of their Opportunity Zone</i>		Ongoing

GOAL 3: PROMOTE AND IMPROVE REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Regional collaboration can be defined as *the coordination and collective work of people, public institutions, and private organizations of multiple disciplines and adjacent or surrounding geographic jurisdictions*. In this case, the counties and cities of the SICOG region are the adjacent geographic jurisdictions. The importance of the collaboration within the region is best understood as an issue of limited resources. A natural unequal distribution of resources occurs in economies due to various reasons, population loss and migration being two of them, resulting in shortages of all types of resources in small towns, which are the dominant urban form in the SICOG region. Regional collaboration is the way resource shortages can be mitigated and neutralized to allow for economic growth and development. Therefore, the following are objectives in the goal of promoting and improving regional collaboration.

- Improve communication between municipalities
- Encourage a regional perspective through plans
- Develop regional data and information resources
- Effectively and efficiently connect local governments with outside resources
- Increase the public knowledge of SICOG services

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Identify potential linkages between communities</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; School Districts; Colleges; SIRWA; SIRHA; other regional resource	Short
<i>Maintain a regional directory of communities and resources</i>		Ongoing
<i>Promote service sharing and equipment sharing between communities</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 2: ENCOURAGE A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE THROUGH PLANS

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Write a regional trail plan</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce	Long
<i>Write a regional housing strategy</i>		Long
<i>Research/pursue grants and funding mechanisms for regional plan writing</i>		Ongoing
<i>Include regional perspectives in comprehensive plans</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3: EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY CONNECT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH OUTSIDE RESOURCES

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Market outside funding sources through various medias</i>	SICOG	Ongoing
<i>Attend meetings and trainings regarding outside funding sources</i>	State and Federal funding agencies; State and Federal sources of public assistance; Regional special purpose agencies and entities; Institutions of higher education; Professional services providers	Ongoing
<i>Include regional perspectives into funding proposals</i>		Ongoing
<i>Utilize outside funding sources for projects in the region as needed</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOP REGIONAL DATA AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Identify and evaluate the most important data to maintain</i>	SICOG	Short
<i>Identify and evaluate the most effective means of distribution</i>		Short
<i>Implement a data update cycle</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 5: INCREASE THE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF SICOG SERVICES

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Identify the most valuable services available to the public through SICOG</i>	SICOG	Short
<i>Identify and implement the most effective means of distribution</i>		Short

GOAL 4: IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

The environment, like an economy, is a system that is so vast, that there are aspects that are still not understood. It can be defined in the same two ways as economic resilience: (1) *the ability of a system to withstand external shocks to and return to its equilibrium* and (2) *the ability of a system to suffer an external shock and adapt to a new equilibrium*. Different from an economic system, an ideal environmental system should not be forced to adapt drastically due to the impact of human society. When an environmental system is forced to do so, it is often to the detriment of human society. Preventing environmental degradation and improving environmental resilience is in the best interest of the region. Therefore, the following are objectives in the goal of improving environmental resilience

- Conduct and participate in hazard mitigation planning
- Improve environmental sustainability of regional transportation systems
- Improve environmental sustainability of the regional housing stock
- Protect and improve regional water quality
- Encourage efficient and sustainable land use and development patterns

OBJECTIVE 1: CONDUCT AND PARTICIPATE IN HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Identify environmental hazards</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; USDA	Short
<i>Complete Hazard Mitigation Plans for counties and municipalities in the region</i>		Ongoing
<i>Promote hazard mitigation planning</i>		Ongoing
<i>Include hazard mitigation sections in comprehensive plans</i>		Ongoing
<i>Research and pursue grant funding</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Research and pursue funding opportunities for alternative modes of transportation</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce; IDOT; SIT; School Districts	Ongoing
<i>Research and pursue funding opportunities for storm water system improvement projects</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; IDOT	Ongoing
<i>Promote and implement sustainable transportation practices</i>		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE REGIONAL HOUSING STOCK

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Explore feasibility (and implement if feasible) of a regional sustainability grant program</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce	Short
<i>Apply for HUD funds for a regional healthy home grant to assist in removal of lead paint, asbestos, mold, and radon from homes</i>	SCOG, SIRWA, MATURA, SCICAP, HUD, County Public Health Departments	Short
<i>Encourage green construction standards in city codes</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG	Ongoing
<i>Promote and support residential weatherization and energy efficiency programs in the region</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; MATURA; SCICAP	Ongoing
<i>Promote, encourage, and support other sustainability initiatives and programs focused in residential areas</i>		Ongoing

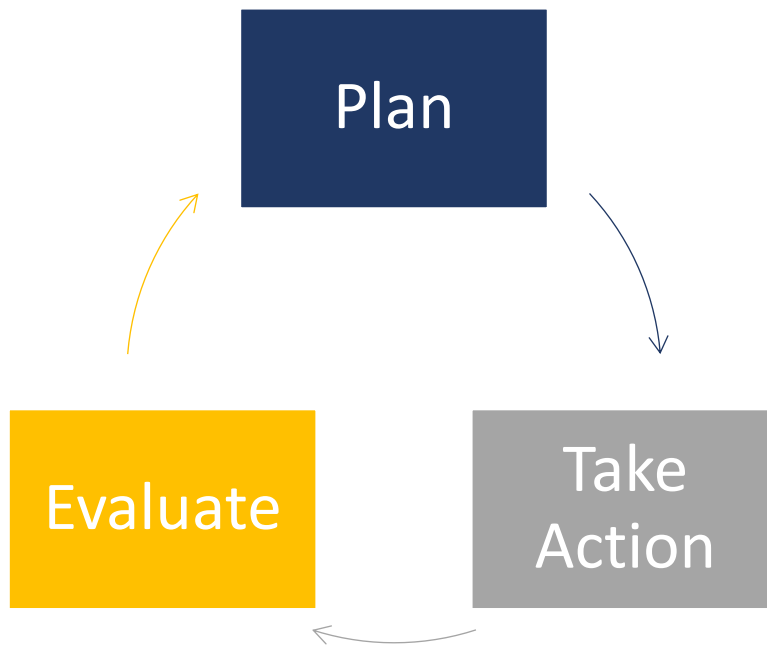
OBJECTIVE 4: PROTECT AND IMPROVE REGIONAL WATER QUALITY

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Evaluate regional water quality and water resource needs</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Soil and Water Conservation Districts; USDA NRCS staff;	Medium
<i>Encourage and conduct regional water resources projects and programs</i>	USDA RC&D staff; SIRWA; IDALS; Iowa State Extension	Ongoing
<i>Include water resource and quality considerations in comprehensive plans</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 5: ENCOURAGE EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Partner(s)</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Provide education, training, and assistance to communities related to comprehensive plans and land use policy</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG	Ongoing
<i>Work with communities as needed on the development of comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances</i>		Ongoing
<i>Research and pursue funding opportunities to demolish dilapidated structures and/or redevelop</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; IDNR	Ongoing
<i>Research and pursue funding opportunities for environmentally-friendly land use development</i>	Cities; Counties; SICOG; Development Corporations; Chambers of Commerce	Ongoing

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



PURPOSE

The 2020 SICOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is meant to be an in-depth analysis of the regional strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats, and priorities using statistics, public perception, and local knowledge. Additionally, it is meant to offer goals, objectives, actions, and strategies to increase regional economic resilience. It is important to utilize measurable performance metrics to keep track of the progress made and the effectiveness of the goals and objectives of this plan. The purpose of this section is to establish and evaluation framework that will be used to measure effectiveness of and allow adjustment to the strategy.

As stated in previous sections, the major goals of this CEDS, in no particular order, are to:

- Improve and maintain the quality of life for residents in the region;
- Improve economic resilience;
- Promote regional collaboration; and
- Improve environmental resilience.

MEASURES

The following measures will be utilized to understand the effectiveness of these goals and are included in the annual update.

GENERAL STATISTICS

- Population
- Unemployment rate
- Total labor force
- Average commute time
- Educational attainment
- Real GDP
- Median household income
- Total wages
- Total regional farm earnings
- Housing values
- Agricultural land values

SICOG STATISTICS

- # of projects utilizing the benefits of the Opportunity Zone
- # of streetscaping projects planned and/or completed
- # of multi-modal transportation projects in progress or completed

- # of regional plans/projects in progress or completed
- # of recreation-related projects in progress or completed
- # of housing projects in progress or completed
- # of Housing Trust Fund projects completed
- # of hazard mitigation projects in progress or completed
- # of comprehensive plans in progress or completed
- # of strategic plans in progress or completed
- # of urban renewal or revitalization plans/projects in progress or completed
- # of zoning ordinance projects in progress or completed
- # of SIDG revolving loan fund projects in progress or completed
- # of storm water-related projects in progress or completed
- # of water quality or resource-related projects in progress or completed

TOOLS AND SOURCES TO BE UTILIZED

- US Census Bureau
- US Bureau of Labor Statistics
- US Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Iowa Workforce Development
- Iowa State University Center for Agricultural and Rural Development
- An annual SICOG survey