

City of Robins, Iowa Looking to the Future



**Prepared by
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Introduction

The City of Robins, assisted by the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG), completed a Comprehensive Plan during 2013. This plan provides a vision for the city through 2030. As with any plan mid-course reviews are advised in order to identify needs for possible adjustments and to provide the information required to make such adjustments in a way that responds meaningfully to the desires of the city's residents. The purpose of this study is to provide information to community leaders and residents to support the updating of the city's current comprehensive plan.

More directly, this study responds to the City of Robins' Strategic Future Growth Outline (SFGO) adopted by the City Council on February 18, 2019 (Resolution 019-4). The primary focus is on the economic development and community identity elements of the SFGO. This report presents the study's findings in the following sections:

- Demographic and Economic Community Profile
- Housing Market Analysis
- Retail Trade, Services and Other Businesses Analysis
- Comparison Cities Analysis

History

The first non-native settlers arrived in the area that is now downtown Cedar Rapids during the 1830s. The City of Robins' namesake, Joseph Robins, came to the area in the early 1840s and in 1842 he bought 200 acres of land from the U.S. Government in Marion Township. Part of the land included in this purchase is located at 7814 Council Street NE in Cedar Rapids. His son, John M. Robins, made two purchases of land in the area that is now part of Robins in 1860 and 1873. These parcels were along present day Main Street from Troy Road on the west to about 500 Main Street on the east.

The initial plat for "Robins Town or Village" was filed on October 19, 1888. The Town of Robins incorporated on October 30, 1911. The first count of the city's population was provided by the 1920 U.S. Census, which identified 110 residents.

Demographic and Economic Profile

Population

The number of people residing in Robins has grown every decade since 1920. Like much of Iowa growth was pretty robust during the baby boom years of the 1950s and 1960s, but then it slowed down during the 1970s. Unlike much of the state, Robins' population did not decline during the 1980s farm recession years. Since 1990 the city's growth has accelerated, with population jumping by 931 (106.4%) during the 1990s and by 1,336 (74.0%) during the 2000s.

Figure 1 shows how the City of Robins' population growth compared to Cedar Rapids, Linn County, and the State of Iowa by decade since 1920. Robins' population growth rate exceeded the growth rate for the State of Iowa every decade and it exceeded the growth rates for Cedar Rapids and Linn County every decade except for the 1930s.

During the 1990s and 2000s Robins' population growth rate far exceeded the rates of growth for Cedar Rapids and Linn County. During the 1990s Robins' population jumped by 106.4% compared to 11.0% for Cedar Rapids and 13.6% for all of Linn County. During the 2000s Robins' population increased by 74.0% compared to only 4.6% for Cedar Rapids and 10.2% for Linn County. One likely reason the growth rate for Cedar Rapids was so low during the 2000s is the 2008 flood of the Cedar River that inundated 10 square miles of the city and damaged more than 5,000 homes.

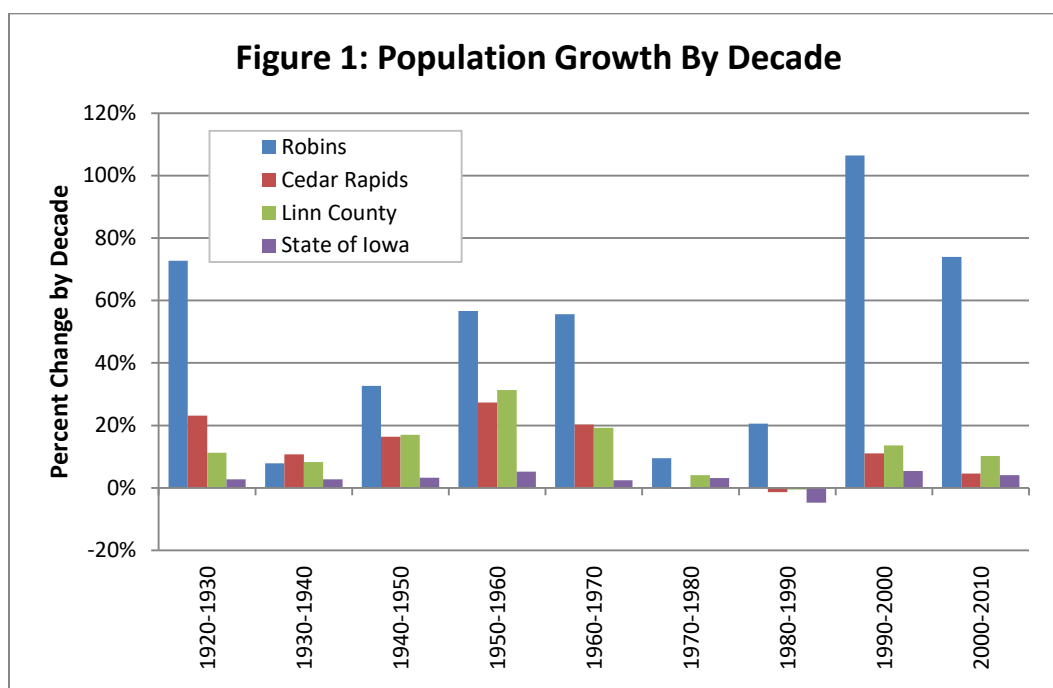


Figure 2 focuses on the period since 1990 showing the annual percent change in population through 2018. This figure presents the annual population growth rates for Robins, Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. The U.S. Census population estimates indicate that from

1990 through 2011 the rate of growth for Robins exceeded the growth rates for the other jurisdictions. Since then Marion has been growing at a slightly faster rate.

It is not too surprising that the growth rate for all jurisdictions dropped off since the last recession. A likely reason that the population growth rate for Robins dropped to a greater extent than did the other jurisdictions is that following the last recession much of the new housing being constructed was multi-family rental. Robins does not contain any of this type of housing.

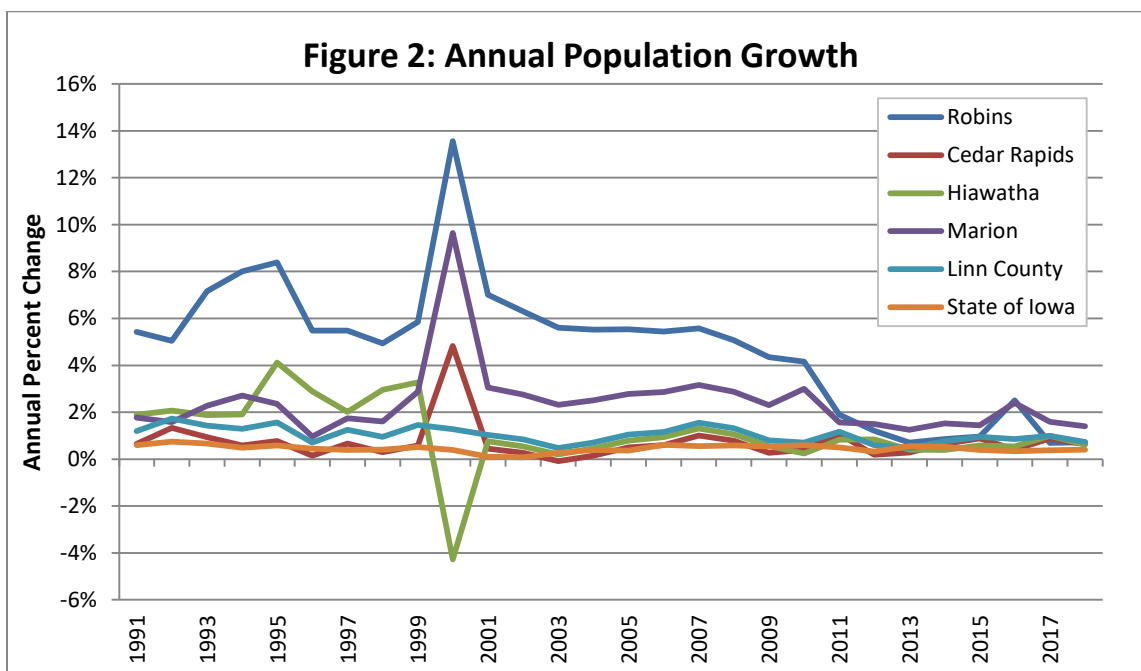


Table 1 presents population levels, population change, percent change, and average annual percent change by five year increments from 1990 through 2015 and for 2015 through 2018 for Robins, Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. Over the entire 28 year period Robins' population increased by 2,534 (264.5%). In comparison, the population of Marion increased by 19,451 (94.8%) and the population of Hiawatha increased by 1,934 (35.4%).

The percent change and the average annual percent change sections of the table show a noticeable decline in the growth rates for all of the jurisdictions after 2010. The average annual growth rate for Robins slowed from 4.9% between 2005 and 2010 to 1.1% between 2010 and 2015. After 2015 the average annual growth rate slowed further to 0.8%.

Similarly, the average annual growth rate for all of Linn County slowed from 1.1% between 2005 and 2010 to 0.8% between 2010 and 2015 to 0.5% after 2015. The slowing of growth countywide has significant implications for the future growth of Robins. To be able to reasonably project future growth for the city it is necessary to understand what factors are most likely to influence the future growth of the surrounding metropolitan area.

Table 1: Population, Population Change and Percent Change

Population						
Years	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
1990	958	109,111	5,459	20,528	169,295	2,781,018
1995	1,331	113,854	6,137	22,815	181,874	2,867,373
2000	1,868	121,360	6,555	26,859	192,365	2,929,067
2005	2,499	122,907	6,738	30,652	200,395	2,964,454
2010	3,177	126,701	7,019	35,257	211,697	3,050,767
2015	3,359	130,635	7,236	37,900	220,211	3,121,460
2018	3,492	133,174	7,393	39,979	225,909	3,156,145

Population Change						
Years	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
1990-1995	373	4,743	678	2,287	12,579	86,355
1995-2000	537	7,506	418	4,044	10,491	61,694
2000-2005	631	1,547	183	3,793	8,030	35,387
2005-2010	678	3,794	281	4,605	11,302	86,313
2010-2015	182	3,934	217	2,643	8,514	70,693
2015-2018	133	2,539	157	2,079	5,698	34,685
1990-2018	2,534	24,063	1,934	19,451	56,614	375,127

Population Percent Change						
Years	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
1990-1995	38.9%	4.3%	12.4%	11.1%	7.4%	3.1%
1995-2000	40.3%	6.6%	6.8%	17.7%	5.8%	2.2%
2000-2005	33.8%	1.3%	2.8%	14.1%	4.2%	1.2%
2005-2010	27.1%	3.1%	4.2%	15.0%	5.6%	2.9%
2010-2015	5.7%	3.1%	3.1%	7.5%	4.0%	2.3%
2015-2018	4.0%	1.9%	2.2%	5.5%	2.6%	1.1%
1990-2018	264.5%	22.1%	35.4%	94.8%	33.4%	13.5%

Population Average Annual Percent Change						
Years	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
1990-1995	6.8%	0.9%	2.4%	2.1%	1.4%	0.6%
1995-2000	7.0%	1.3%	1.3%	3.3%	1.1%	0.4%
2000-2005	6.0%	0.3%	0.6%	2.7%	0.8%	0.2%
2005-2010	4.9%	0.6%	0.8%	2.8%	1.1%	0.6%
2010-2015	1.1%	0.6%	0.6%	1.5%	0.8%	0.5%
2015-2018	0.8%	0.4%	0.4%	1.1%	0.5%	0.2%
1990-2018	1.3%	0.6%	0.7%	1.8%	0.9%	0.4%

Age and Gender Distribution

Table 2 presents the 2017 age distribution estimates for the populations of Robins, Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. The estimates are based on 5-year average estimates from the U.S. Census' American Community Survey. Table 3 presents estimates of population shares by age cohort.

Table 2: Population by Age Cohort, 2017

Age Cohort	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Under 5 years	77	8,972	539	2,040	13,945	196,485
5 to 19 years	843	24,610	1,494	7,910	43,819	624,899
20 to 29 years	176	20,503	1,231	4,421	29,999	421,552
30 to 39 years	272	18,408	988	5,709	29,993	386,827
40 to 49 years	737	15,102	753	5,026	27,291	366,796
50 to 64 years	797	24,078	1,372	7,178	42,511	620,517
65 to 74 years	236	9,891	537	3,278	17,948	269,334
75 to 84 years	202	5,714	222	1,730	9,873	153,914
85 years and over	40	3,052	126	722	4,629	77,778
Total	3,380	130,330	7,262	38,014	220,008	3,118,102

Table 3: Population Shares by Age Cohort, 2017

Age Cohort	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Under 5 years	2.3%	6.9%	7.4%	5.4%	6.3%	6.3%
5 to 19 years	24.9%	18.9%	20.6%	20.8%	19.9%	20.0%
20 to 29 years	5.2%	15.7%	17.0%	11.6%	13.6%	13.5%
30 to 39 years	8.0%	14.1%	13.6%	15.0%	13.6%	12.4%
40 to 49 years	21.8%	11.6%	10.4%	13.2%	12.4%	11.8%
50 to 64 years	23.6%	18.5%	18.9%	18.9%	19.3%	19.9%
65 to 74 years	7.0%	7.6%	7.4%	8.6%	8.2%	8.6%
75 to 84 years	6.0%	4.4%	3.1%	4.6%	4.5%	4.9%
85 years and over	1.2%	2.3%	1.7%	1.9%	2.1%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3 reveals a number of interesting differences between the age distribution of Robins' population and age distributions of the other Linn County jurisdictions and for the State of Iowa. Pre-schoolers (age under 5 years) account for only 2.3% of Robins' population, while their share for all of Linn County equals 6.3%, the same as the statewide share. Accompanying the low number of young children, Robins' includes a relatively small number of young adults among its residents. The share of Robins' population accounted for by 20 to 29 year olds equals only 5.2% compared to 13.6% for all of Linn County. Similarly, the 30 to 39 years age group accounts for only 8.0% of Robins' population compared to a 13.6% share countywide.

Robins' population shares exceed the countywide share for age groups 5 to 19 years, 40 to 49 years, and 50 to 59 years. These age groups represent middle age families. These are likely families where the parents are well established in their careers. Also, the homes where they reside are likely at least the second homes that they have occupied.

Finally, looking at the upper end of the age spectrum, the share of Robins' population that is age 75 to 84 years equals 6.0%, while for all of Linn County this age group accounts for 4.5% of the total population. But for the oldest group of residents, those age 85 years and older, Robins' share equals only 1.2% compared to a countywide share of 2.1%. This may indicate a limited supply of elderly housing options in the city.

In addition to the City of Robins' population having an age distribution that is noticeably different than the distribution for all of Linn County, the city's population distribution by gender exhibits some unusual features. As Table 4 shows the city has an unusually large share of male residents in the age range from 20 to 29 years – 59.1% males and 40.9% females. Then, the next age group 30 to 39 years, is more female – 44.9% males and 55.1% females.

Table 4: City of Robins Gender by Age, 2017

Age Cohort	Number			Share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Under 5 years	77	39	38	50.6%	49.4%
5 to 19 years	843	442	401	52.4%	47.6%
20 to 29 years	176	104	72	59.1%	40.9%
30 to 39 years	272	122	150	44.9%	55.1%
40 to 49 years	737	390	347	52.9%	47.1%
50 to 64 years	797	391	406	49.1%	50.9%
65 to 74 years	236	128	108	54.2%	45.8%
75 to 84 years	202	94	108	46.5%	53.5%
85 years and over	40	17	23	42.5%	57.5%
Total	3,380	1,727	1,653	51.1%	48.9%

Household Types

Another feature of the population that has significant implications for what public and private services a city needs to provide is the type of households. Table 5 presents counts by various types of households, which include married couples, male and female headed households with children but no spouse present, single males and females living alone or with another unrelated adult. The data source for these statistics is the U.S. Census' American Community Survey.

Table 5: Number of Households by Type, 2017

Household Type	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Family households	1,054	31,495	1,903	10,219	56,172	800,576
Married-couple family	1,020	23,797	1,404	8,044	44,260	635,516
Householder 15 to 34 years	41	4,719	300	1,260	7,481	103,107
Householder 35 to 64 years	768	14,117	836	5,089	27,412	387,476
Householder 65 years and over	211	4,961	268	1,695	9,367	144,933
Other family	34	7,698	499	2,175	11,912	165,060
Male householder, no wife	20	2,230	87	746	3,712	52,688
Householder 15 to 34 years	9	692	20	236	1,089	17,200
Householder 35 to 64 years	11	1,363	54	455	2,313	30,628
Householder 65 years and over	0	175	13	55	310	4,860
Female householder, no husband	14	5,468	412	1,429	8,200	112,372
Householder 15 to 34 years	4	1,894	124	368	2,500	36,076
Householder 35 to 64 years	10	2,993	288	927	4,752	62,083
Householder 65 years and over	0	581	0	134	948	14,213
Nonfamily households	155	22,938	1,042	5,013	32,889	451,011
Householder living alone	144	18,242	788	3,883	26,091	362,580
Householder 15 to 34 years	11	3,801	170	638	4,907	63,619
Householder 35 to 64 years	92	8,155	387	1,853	11,931	153,399
Householder 65 years and over	41	6,286	231	1,392	9,253	145,562
Householder not living alone	11	4,696	254	1,130	6,798	88,431
Householder 15 to 34 years	6	2,902	179	585	3,958	53,236
Householder 35 to 64 years	0	1,481	75	449	2,298	28,696
Householder 65 years and over	5	313	0	96	542	6,499
Total Households	1,209	54,433	2,945	15,232	89,061	1,251,587

Table 5 indicates that 1,209 households reside in Robins and that 1,020 of the 1,054 family households are headed by married couples. Of the 34 other family households 20 have male heads and 14 have female heads. The remaining 155 Robins' households consist of 144 individuals living alone and 11 living with another adult.

Other interesting information provided in this table shows the age distribution of the households. The three age categories are 15 to 34 years, 35 to 64 years, and 65 years and over. Of all types of Robins' households 881 are headed by a person between the ages of 35 and 64 years.

In addition to Robins, Table 5 provides similar household type counts for Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. Table 6 provides comparable information in terms of the percentage of each jurisdiction's total households accounted for by each type of household. The percentage shares makes it easier to compare the distribution of household types across the jurisdictions.

Table 6: Share of Households by Type, 2017

Household Type	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Family households	87.2%	57.9%	64.6%	67.1%	63.1%	64.0%
Married-couple family	84.4%	43.7%	47.7%	52.8%	49.7%	50.8%
Householder 15 to 34 years	3.4%	8.7%	10.2%	8.3%	8.4%	8.2%
Householder 35 to 64 years	63.5%	25.9%	28.4%	33.4%	30.8%	31.0%
Householder 65 years and over	17.5%	9.1%	9.1%	11.1%	10.5%	11.6%
Other family	2.8%	14.1%	16.9%	14.3%	13.4%	13.2%
Male householder, no wife	1.7%	4.1%	3.0%	4.9%	4.2%	4.2%
Householder 15 to 34 years	0.7%	1.3%	0.7%	1.5%	1.2%	1.4%
Householder 35 to 64 years	0.9%	2.5%	1.8%	3.0%	2.6%	2.4%
Householder 65 years and over	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Female householder, no husband	1.2%	10.0%	14.0%	9.4%	9.2%	9.0%
Householder 15 to 34 years	0.3%	3.5%	4.2%	2.4%	2.8%	2.9%
Householder 35 to 64 years	0.8%	5.5%	9.8%	6.1%	5.3%	5.0%
Householder 65 years and over	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.9%	1.1%	1.1%
Nonfamily households	12.8%	42.1%	35.4%	32.9%	36.9%	36.0%
Householder living alone	11.9%	33.5%	26.8%	25.5%	29.3%	29.0%
Householder 15 to 34 years	0.9%	7.0%	5.8%	4.2%	5.5%	5.1%
Householder 35 to 64 years	7.6%	15.0%	13.1%	12.2%	13.4%	12.3%
Householder 65 years and over	3.4%	11.5%	7.8%	9.1%	10.4%	11.6%
Householder not living alone	0.9%	8.6%	8.6%	7.4%	7.6%	7.1%
Householder 15 to 34 years	0.5%	5.3%	6.1%	3.8%	4.4%	4.3%
Householder 35 to 64 years	0.0%	2.7%	2.5%	2.9%	2.6%	2.3%
Householder 65 years and over	0.4%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
Total Households	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There are a number of differences between the character of households that reside in Robins and elsewhere in Linn County and statewide. Most notable among these differences are:

- Married couples account for 84.4% of all Robins' households. Among the other jurisdictions the next highest share is Marion with 52.8%. Countywide married couples account for 49.7% and the statewide share equals 50.8%.
- Only 12.8% of people residing in Robins either live alone or with other unrelated adults, which are classified as nonfamily households. For all of Linn County this type of household accounts for 36.9% of all households and statewide the share equals 36.0%.

- Only 3.4% of Robins' households are married couples headed by a person under 35 years old, while the shares of similar "young" households countywide equals 8.4% and statewide 8.2%.
- On the other hand, 63.5% of Robins' households consist of married couples with and without children headed by a person age 35 to 64 years, while countywide and statewide similar households account for only 30.8% and 31.0% of all households.
- In Robins the share of household headed by men without a wife present (1.7%) exceeds the share of households headed by women without a husband present (1.2%). For all of Linn County the share of households headed by a female without a husband present (9.2%) far exceeds the share of households headed by a male without a wife present (4.2%).

Household Income

Household income influences many aspects of a city's economy including size and value of housing units, retail trade and service business opportunities, and the tax base available to support public services. Table 7 provides household counts by ten annual income ranges with the lowest range being under \$10,000 and highest range being \$200,000 or more. In addition, this table presents jurisdiction level statistics for median household income, mean household income, total household income, and the ratio of mean-to-median household income for Robins, Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. The data source for the table is the 2017 American Community Survey.

Table 7: Number of Households by Income Level, 2017

Household Income	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Less than \$10,000	5	2,899	81	459	3,935	71,544
\$10,000 to \$14,999	10	2,426	127	513	3,439	57,984
\$15,000 to \$24,999	47	5,023	345	1,328	7,571	124,425
\$25,000 to \$34,999	28	5,680	506	1,392	8,542	123,477
\$35,000 to \$49,999	118	7,809	597	1,802	11,907	175,714
\$50,000 to \$74,999	101	10,669	463	2,596	16,697	244,762
\$75,000 to \$99,999	162	7,464	310	2,807	13,249	175,018
\$100,000 to \$149,999	264	8,062	325	2,693	14,796	174,081
\$150,000 to \$199,999	228	2,573	148	848	5,095	56,730
\$200,000 or more	246	1,828	43	794	3,830	47,852
Total Households	1,209	54,433	2,945	15,232	89,061	1,251,587
Median income (\$)	\$120,938	\$56,828	\$43,280	\$69,882	\$62,702	\$56,570
Mean income (\$)	\$150,624	\$73,859	\$61,893	\$81,919	\$79,291	\$73,510
Total Income (\$ Mil)	\$182.1	\$4,020.4	\$182.3	\$1,247.8	\$7,061.7	\$92,004.2
Ratio Mean-to-Median	1.25	1.30	1.43	1.17	1.26	1.30

The jurisdiction level statistics at the bottom of Table 7 provide a high level comparison between Robins, the other primary cities that comprise the Cedar Rapids Urbanized Area, Linn County, and the state. Both Robins' median household income (\$120,938) and mean household income (\$150,624) are over double the comparable figures for the state. Marion is the jurisdiction with the next highest median (\$69,882) and mean (\$81,919) household incomes.

The total household income for Robins equals an estimated \$182.1 million, which is about the same as Hiawatha's \$182.3 million. But Hiawatha has 2.4 times as many households as does Robins. Total household income for Robins equaled only 2.6% of household income for all of Linn County during 2017.

The ratio of mean-to-median household income provides an indication of the relative equality of the distribution of income within a jurisdiction. The 2017 ratio for Robins equals 1.25. In comparison the ratio for all of Linn County is 1.26 and for the State of Iowa it is 1.30.

Table 8 presents the percentages of households in each income range for Robins, Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. The table shows that Robins is much more affluent than other communities in Linn County or the state as a whole. 20.3% of Robins' households have incomes of \$200 thousand or more while countywide and statewide the shares of households at this income level are only 4.3% and 3.8%, respectively. Also, 61.0% of Robins' household have incomes of \$100 thousand or more compared to 26.6% countywide and 22.3% statewide.

Table 8: Share of Households by Income Level, 2017

Household Income	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Less than \$10,000	0.4%	5.3%	2.8%	3.0%	4.4%	5.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0.8%	4.5%	4.3%	3.4%	3.9%	4.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3.9%	9.2%	11.7%	8.7%	8.5%	9.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2.3%	10.4%	17.2%	9.1%	9.6%	9.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	9.8%	14.3%	20.3%	11.8%	13.4%	14.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8.4%	19.6%	15.7%	17.0%	18.7%	19.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	13.4%	13.7%	10.5%	18.4%	14.9%	14.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	21.8%	14.8%	11.0%	17.7%	16.6%	13.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	18.9%	4.7%	5.0%	5.6%	5.7%	4.5%
\$200,000 or more	20.3%	3.4%	1.5%	5.2%	4.3%	3.8%
Total Households	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Housing Analysis

The information sources used for the housing analysis include the American Community Survey (ACS), Linn County residential assessment records, and City of Robins' building permit statistics. Because the American Community Survey data consists of 5-year moving average estimates, the statistics obtained from this source do not always match the statistics from the other two sources. For example, the American Community Survey indicates there are 1,228 housing units located in the City of Robins. The Linn County Assessor's records include 1,280 residential units plus another 10 agricultural dwellings. Part of the difference may be due to the dates of the two data sources.

The first part of the analysis uses the American Community Survey data to provide comparisons of the inventory of housing units in the City of Robins with those of Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. These data are used to make four types of comparisons:

- By type of housing units
- By age of housing units
- By size of housing units
- By value of housing units

The second part of the analysis uses Linn County Assessor's property parcel data to provide a more in-depth analysis of City of Robins' housing stock. In particular, the County Assessor's data are used to investigate how the value of housing varies depending on dwelling style, age, and size.

The third part of the analysis uses a second set of data from the Linn County Assessor that pertains to residential property sales for the period from January 1, 2015 through June 30, 2019. These data are used to analyze property sales patterns for the City of Robins and for Hiawatha and Marion to provide a basis for comparison to Robins. The types of factors taken into consideration in this analysis include:

- House style
- House size
- House age
- House location

Jurisdiction Level Housing Comparisons

According to the 2017 ACS estimates, 1,209 (98.5%) of the 1,228 housing units located in the City of Robins were occupied. Of the occupied units 1,170 are identified as owner-occupied and the remaining 39 are identified as renter occupied.

For all of the housing units, 1,188 are identified as single-family detached and the remaining 40 units are identified as single-family attached. This classification of the housing units by type is consistent with the County Assessor's data, although it is not an exact match. The County Assessor's residential parcel data shows there are 1,243 single-family/ owner-occupied units and 36 zero lot line units, but only 1 single-family/ rental unit.

Table 9 presents housing type breakdown comparison counts for Robins, Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. Table 10 presents housing type breakdown shares for all of the jurisdictions.

Table 9: Number of Housing Units by Type, 2017

Housing Type	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Total Housing Units	1,228	58,947	3,242	16,153	95,706	1,376,133
Occupied Housing Units	1,209	54,433	2,945	15,232	89,061	1,251,587
Vacant Housing Units	19	4,514	297	921	6,645	124,546
Owner-Occupied Units	1,170	37,861	1,812	11,802	66,089	889,285
Renter-Occupied Units	39	16,572	1,133	3,430	22,972	362,302
1-unit, detached	1,188	37,406	1,403	10,260	64,499	1,011,477
1-unit, attached	40	2,784	124	1,476	4,937	53,999
2 units	0	1,018	121	173	1,512	32,151
3 or 4 units	0	2,604	250	799	4,028	46,453
5 to 9 units	0	3,363	134	582	4,333	50,771
10 to 19 units	0	5,210	505	731	6,477	54,233
20 or more units	0	4,365	216	856	5,451	76,173
Mobile home	0	2,183	489	1,276	4,428	50,477
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	14	0	0	41	399

Table 10: Share of Housing Units by Type, 2017

Housing Type	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Total Housing Units	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Occupied Housing Units	98.5%	92.3%	90.8%	94.3%	93.1%	90.9%
Vacant Housing Units	1.5%	7.7%	9.2%	5.7%	6.9%	9.1%
Owner-Occupied Units	95.3%	64.2%	55.9%	73.1%	69.1%	64.6%
Renter-Occupied Units	3.2%	28.1%	34.9%	21.2%	24.0%	26.3%
1-unit, detached	96.7%	63.5%	43.3%	63.5%	67.4%	73.5%
1-unit, attached	3.3%	4.7%	3.8%	9.1%	5.2%	3.9%
2 units	0.0%	1.7%	3.7%	1.1%	1.6%	2.3%
3 or 4 units	0.0%	4.4%	7.7%	4.9%	4.2%	3.4%
5 to 9 units	0.0%	5.7%	4.1%	3.6%	4.5%	3.7%
10 to 19 units	0.0%	8.8%	15.6%	4.5%	6.8%	3.9%
20 or more units	0.0%	7.4%	6.7%	5.3%	5.7%	5.5%
Mobile home	0.0%	3.7%	15.1%	7.9%	4.6%	3.7%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

As Table 10 shows, Robins contains no multi-family housing. The closest thing Robins has to multi-family housing is the 40 units of attached (zero lot line) housing. For all of Linn County, 67.4% of housing units are single-family detached, 5.2% are single-family attached, 1.6% are duplexes, 21.2% are in buildings with 3 or more units, and 4.6% are mobile homes. Hiawatha has the smallest share of single-family detached housing (47.1%) and the highest share of multi-family housing (34.1%) and mobile homes (15.1%).

Tables 11 and 12 show that Robins' housing is newer than in the other local jurisdictions and for the state as a whole. According to the ACS data, 97 housing units (7.9%) in Robins was constructed since the beginning of 2010 and 513 housing units (41.8%) were constructed between 2000 and 2009. So, just about half (49.7%) of Robins' housing has been constructed since 2000.

Table 11: Number of Housing Units by Year Built

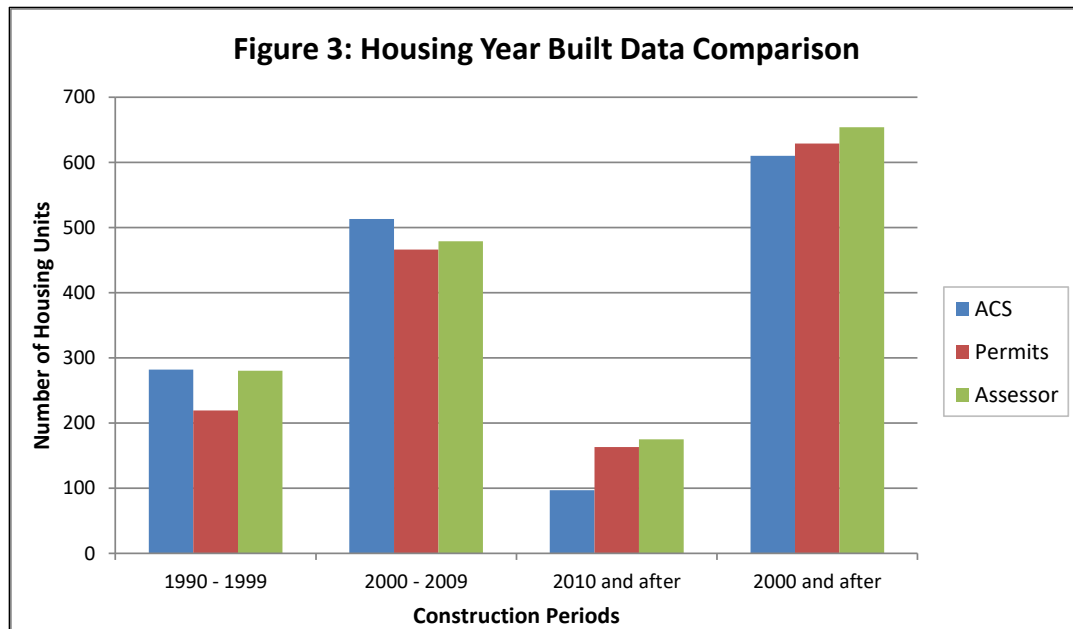
Year Built	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
2014 or later	46	551	14	380	1,230	13,206
2010 to 2013	51	1,937	124	660	3,306	37,051
2000 to 2009	513	7,188	383	3,925	14,636	159,532
1990 to 1999	282	8,244	939	3,503	15,114	147,201
1980 to 1989	89	4,746	275	1,193	7,359	101,713
1970 to 1979	95	8,734	701	1,690	13,246	198,840
1960 to 1969	49	8,496	454	2,242	12,967	145,046
1950 to 1959	50	7,165	306	1,314	10,257	141,484
1940 to 1949	5	2,621	15	211	3,595	73,016
1939 or earlier	48	9,265	31	1,035	13,996	359,044
Total Housing Units	1,228	58,947	3,242	16,153	95,706	1,376,133

Table 12: Share of Housing Units by Year Built

Year Built	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
2014 or later	3.7%	0.9%	0.4%	2.4%	1.3%	1.0%
2010 to 2013	4.2%	3.3%	3.8%	4.1%	3.5%	2.7%
2000 to 2009	41.8%	12.2%	11.8%	24.3%	15.3%	11.6%
1990 to 1999	23.0%	14.0%	29.0%	21.7%	15.8%	10.7%
1980 to 1989	7.2%	8.1%	8.5%	7.4%	7.7%	7.4%
1970 to 1979	7.7%	14.8%	21.6%	10.5%	13.8%	14.4%
1960 to 1969	4.0%	14.4%	14.0%	13.9%	13.5%	10.5%
1950 to 1959	4.1%	12.2%	9.4%	8.1%	10.7%	10.3%
1940 to 1949	0.4%	4.4%	0.5%	1.3%	3.8%	5.3%
1939 or earlier	3.9%	15.7%	1.0%	6.4%	14.6%	26.1%
Total Housing Units	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Housing Data Sources Comparison

As stated previously, the data sources – the American Community Survey (ACS), city building permits, and assessment records – used for the housing analysis for the City of Robins do not exactly agree. This is illustrated by the following figure, which shows the number of housing units constructed during different time periods since 1990.



For the earliest period (1990 – 1999) the permit data is low due to data from that source only going back to 1992. The ACS estimate for the years 2010 and after is likely low since that data source only goes through 2017. The total counts for the period 2000 and after are remarkably close varying by only 44 units from low (ACS: 610) to high (Assessor: 654).

The demographic data presented in the first part of this report shows that the population of the City of Robins is older than the population in the remainder of the county. Also, most all of the city's households consist of married couples, but only 38.1% of all households have children under the age of 18. In addition, Robins' households have considerably higher income than do households that reside elsewhere in Linn County. These characteristics of the city's households have implications for the size and value of homes located in Robins.

Tables 13 and 14 present summary statistics for the number and share of houses located in Robins by size as measured by the number of bedrooms. These tables present similar data for Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Marion, Linn County, and the State of Iowa. As one might expect based on the demographic character of Robins, the city's housing stock is skewed toward larger homes compared to the other jurisdictions in Linn County.

Table 13: Number of Houses by Size (Bedrooms), 2017

Year Built	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
No bedroom	0	1,009	59	243	1,368	20,074
1 bedroom	5	6,367	269	1,243	8,642	128,045
2 bedrooms	65	17,360	1,399	3,334	25,079	383,172
3 bedrooms	467	22,153	1,083	6,866	37,674	529,753
4 bedrooms	382	9,494	303	3,276	17,468	244,323
5 or more bedrooms	309	2,564	129	1,191	5,475	70,766
Total Housing Units	1,228	58,947	3,242	16,153	95,706	1,376,133

Table 14: Share of Houses by Size (Bedrooms), 2017

Year Built	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
No bedroom	0.0%	1.7%	1.8%	1.5%	1.4%	1.5%
1 bedroom	0.4%	10.8%	8.3%	7.7%	9.0%	9.3%
2 bedrooms	5.3%	29.5%	43.2%	20.6%	26.2%	27.8%
3 bedrooms	38.0%	37.6%	33.4%	42.5%	39.4%	38.5%
4 bedrooms	31.1%	16.1%	9.3%	20.3%	18.3%	17.8%
5 or more bedrooms	25.2%	4.3%	4.0%	7.4%	5.7%	5.1%
Total Housing Units	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Robins has only five 1-bedroom housing units (0.4%) and only sixty-five 2-bedroom housing units (5.3%). In comparison, for all of Linn County 1-bedroom units account for 9.0% and 2-bedroom units account for 26.2% of the housing units. Robins' share of housing units with three bedrooms (38.0%) compares closely to the remainder of Linn County where the share equals 39.4% and the state as a whole where 3-bedroom units account for 38.5% of the housing units.

Robins' share of housing with four bedrooms equals 31.1% compared to 18.3% countywide and 17.8% statewide. Marion has the next highest share of housing with four bedrooms at 20.3%. Robins dominates the category of the largest homes, those with five or more bedrooms. While Robins has 25.2% of its houses with 5 or more bedrooms, the countywide share equals only 5.7% and the statewide share equals only 5.1%. Even in Marion the share of houses with 5 or more bedrooms equals only 7.4%.

Finally, Tables 15 and 16 provide information on the number and share of housing units by eight value ranges. The lowest range is "Less than \$50,000" and the highest range is "\$1,000,000 or more." In addition, Table 15 provides information on the median house value by jurisdiction and on the number of houses in each jurisdiction with and without mortgages.

The median house value in Robins is \$286,700, which is \$136,100 (90.4%) above the countywide median. Over three-quarters (75.2%) of the houses in Robins have a value of \$200,000 or more.

Table 15: Number of Houses by Value, 2017

House Value	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Less than \$50,000	15	2,000	491	1,063	4,170	90,767
\$50,000 to \$99,999	42	6,846	170	1,088	9,328	203,149
\$100,000 to \$149,999	51	13,160	336	3,215	19,340	196,759
\$150,000 to \$199,999	182	8,031	259	2,773	13,837	153,250
\$200,000 to \$299,999	330	5,544	432	2,484	12,712	147,859
\$300,000 to \$499,999	394	1,730	90	1,008	4,905	73,685
\$500,000 to \$999,999	151	470	8	142	1,502	19,079
\$1,000,000 or more	5	80	26	29	295	4,737
Total Owner-Occupied Units	1,170	37,861	1,812	11,802	66,089	889,285
Median (dollars)	\$286,700	\$138,500	\$140,900	\$159,300	\$150,600	\$137,200
Housing Units with Mortgage	828	26,149	890	8,183	44,712	541,664
Housing Units w/o Mortgage	342	11,712	922	3,619	21,377	347,621

Table 16: Share of Houses by Value, 2017

House Value	Robins	Cedar Rapids	Hiawatha	Marion	Linn County	State of Iowa
Less than \$50,000	1.3%	5.3%	27.1%	9.0%	6.3%	10.2%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	3.6%	18.1%	9.4%	9.2%	14.1%	22.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	4.4%	34.8%	18.5%	27.2%	29.3%	22.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	15.6%	21.2%	14.3%	23.5%	20.9%	17.2%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	28.2%	14.6%	23.8%	21.0%	19.2%	16.6%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	33.7%	4.6%	5.0%	8.5%	7.4%	8.3%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	12.9%	1.2%	0.4%	1.2%	2.3%	2.1%
\$1,000,000 or more	0.4%	0.2%	1.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%
Total Owner-Occupied Units	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Housing Units with Mortgage	70.8%	69.1%	49.1%	69.3%	67.7%	60.9%
Housing Units w/o Mortgage	29.2%	30.9%	50.9%	30.7%	32.3%	39.1%

Countywide the share of houses valued at \$200,000 or more equals only 29.4%. The share of Robins' houses that have mortgages (70.8%) is slightly higher than the share of houses countywide that have mortgages (67.7%).

In summary, what the American Community Survey data indicates about the state of housing in the City of Robins is:

- All units of housing are single-family and the overwhelming majority are detached (96.7%),
- Almost half (49.7%) of the housing units were constructed since the year 2000,
- 94.3% of the housing units have three or more bedrooms, and

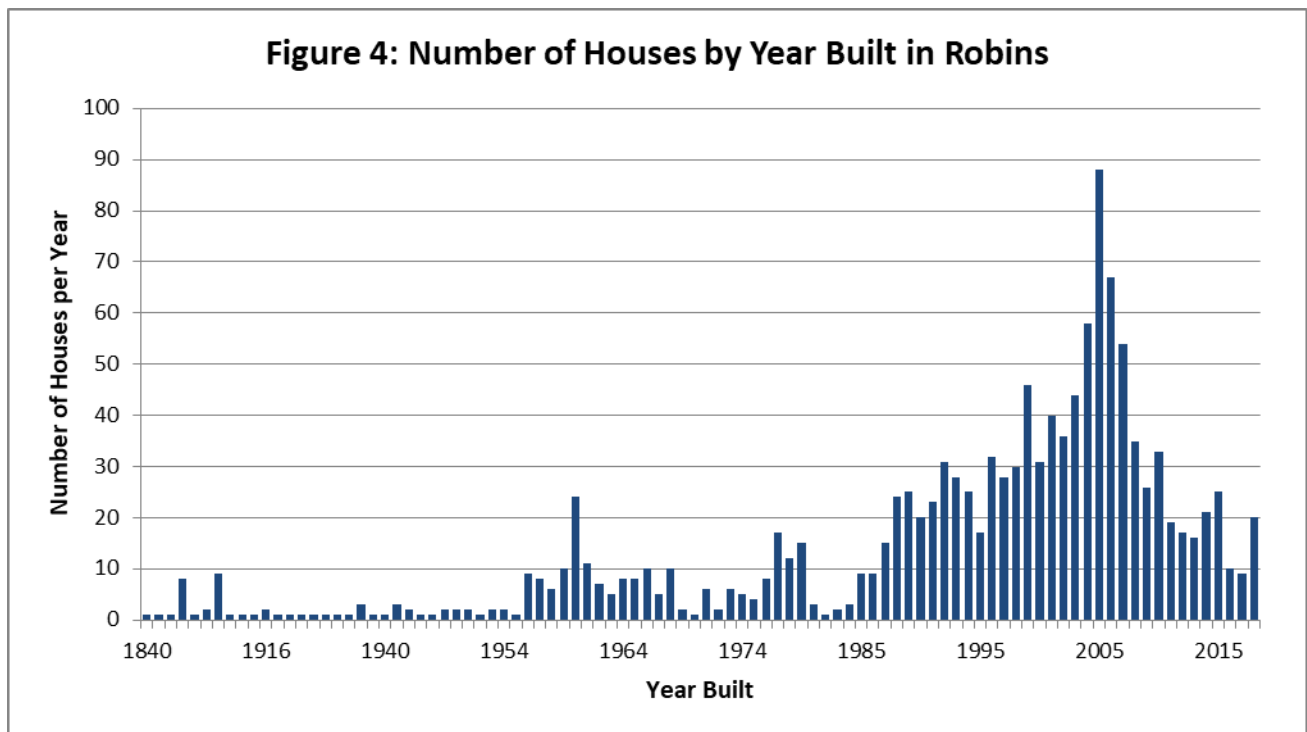
- The median value of housing located in the city is almost double that of the countywide median.

Robins Housing Trends Analysis

Parcel level data were obtained from the Linn County Assessor and Linn County GIS Division for all residential properties located in the City of Robins. The records for each parcel provide information on:

- Location by tax district
- Location by street address
- Style of house and number of stories
- Year built
- Lot size
- Total living area
- Number of bedrooms
- Assessment valuation

This analysis focuses on how the value of housing relates to different property characteristics. But first the data are used to present a picture of housing construction trends. Figure 4 shows that dating back to the mid-1800s the number of homes built rarely exceeded more than a couple per year, and many years no new houses were built.



A small growth spurt following World War II began in the mid-1950s and extended through the mid-1970s. Over that period an average of about eight houses per year were constructed. Then during the

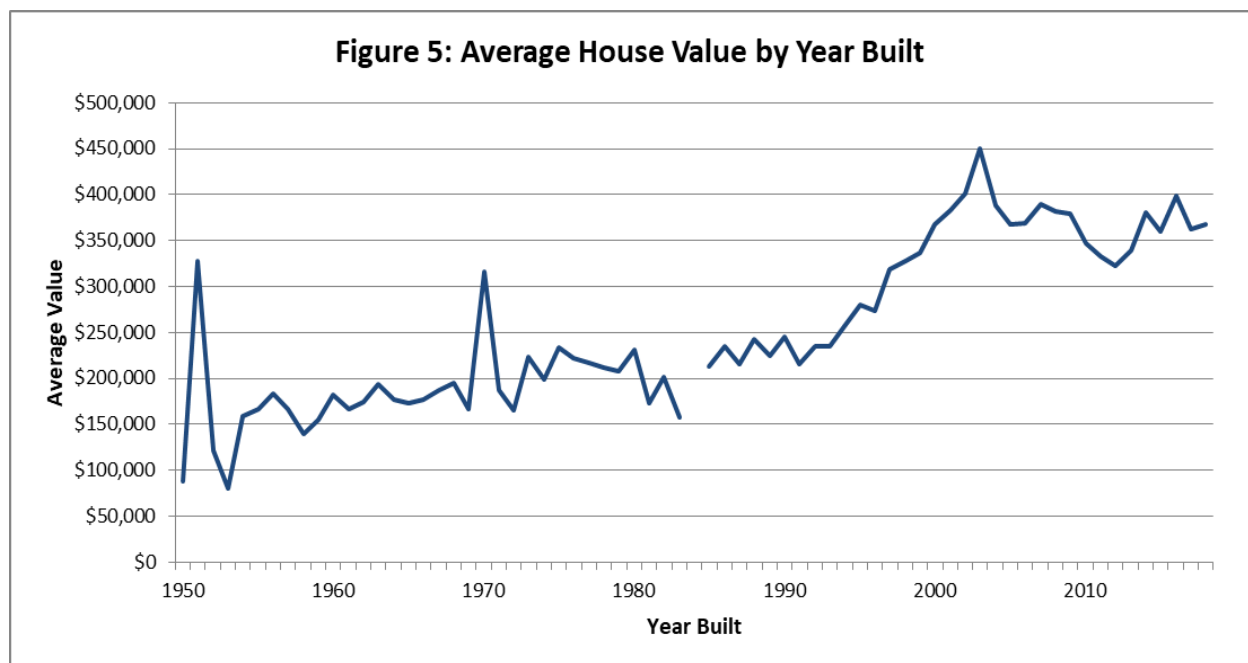
four years from 1980 – 1983, the period of the farm recession, only a total of nine houses were constructed in Robins.

A sustained period of city growth began during the mid-1980s and through the start of the Great Recession in 2008. During that period the number of new houses constructed per year rose from 9 during 1985 to a peak of 88 during 2005. Construction activity started to decline even before the start of the recession dropping to 54 in 2007. Then during and following the recession the number of new houses constructed fell to a low of 9 units during 2017. However, during 2018 the number recovered to 20.

Three additional trends the merit consideration are:

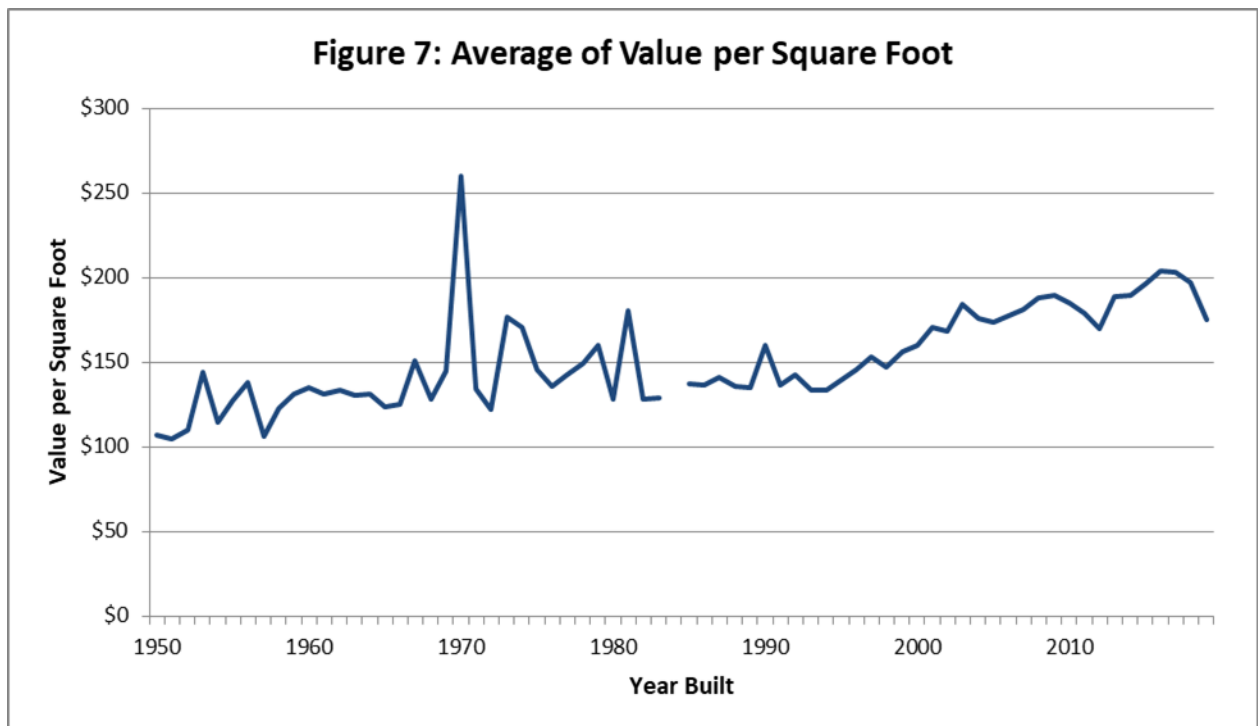
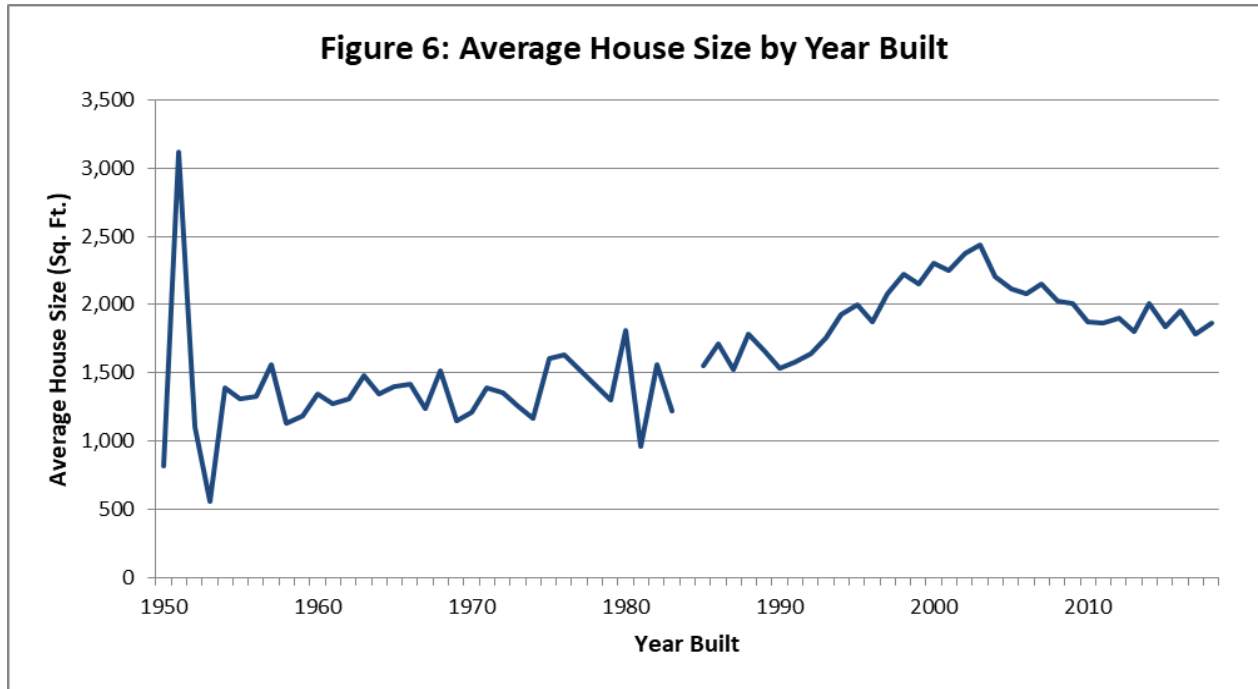
- Value per housing unit
- Average size per housing unit
- Average valuation per square foot of livable space

Figure 5 presents the average house value trend for the period from 1950 through 2018. Exclusive of the outlier years of 1951 and 1970, as well as 1984 when no houses were built, the figure shows a modest upward trend from 1950 through 1993. Then from 1993 through 2003 the average house value jumps by 91.8% from \$234,386 to \$449,536. The number of houses constructed during this period averaged over 32 per year, so the increase in value was not caused by a few unusually expensive houses. With the advent of the last recession average house values declined bottoming out at \$322,265 during 2012. For the 20 houses constructed during 2018 the average value equaled \$367,350.



As shown in Figure 6, the average house size increased from the 1950s through 2003. With the except of two large houses built on large lots during 1951, houses built during the 1950s averaged only 1,244

square feet of livable space. The average house size during 2003 equaled 2,436 square feet. Since 2003 the average size of houses declined to about 1,800 square feet. The average size of the 20 houses built during 2018 in Robins equaled 1,866 square feet.



Combining the value and size data, Figure 7 shows the trend for the value per square foot of livable space for houses constructed from 1950 through 2018. With the exception of a single small (1,212 sq. ft.), expensive (\$315,550) house constructed during 1970 the value per square foot of houses built in Robins experienced a modest upward trend from 1950 through 2016. Over that period the average value per square foot increased from \$107 to \$204, which equals a 90.7% increase. Over the same period the consumer price index increased by 943.6%.

For the 20 houses constructed during 2018, the average value per square foot of livable space equaled \$197.

Relationship between Housing Characteristics and Value

The age, style, number of bedrooms, and livable square footage data contained in the Linn County Assessor's records can be used to develop an understanding of key factors that influence the value of residential property located in the City of Robins. There certainly are other factors that influence a house's value that this analysis cannot address, such as variation in the quality of materials used in constructing different houses.

Table 17 presents counts of the number of houses by style spread over four construction time periods. The periods are: (1) Before 1990, (2) 1990 – 1999, (3) 2000 – 2009, and (4) 2010 – 2019. The table accounts for 1,277 of the houses located in the City of Robins for which there are assessment records. Three residential properties have been left out of this part of the analysis due to their unique style. Two are log cabins and one is a "berm" house.

Table 17: Number of Houses by Style and Period

House Styles	Period Built				All Years
	Before 1990	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2009	2010 - 2019	
1-Story Frame	236	176	388	170	970
1-Story Brick	5	2	2	1	10
1 1/2-Story Frame	18	3	2	0	23
2-Story Frame	27	69	84	3	183
2-Story Brick	2	0	1	0	3
Split Foyer Frame	43	15	2	0	60
Split Foyer Brick	1	0	0	0	1
Split Level	15	12	0	0	27
All Styles	347	277	479	174	1,277

The table shows that approximately three-quarters of housing units located in Robins are 1-story frame construction. Of the 174 houses constructed since 2010, all except 3 are single story. This style of construction is consistent with the demographic data presented earlier in the report that shows that Robins has a more mature population than do the other parts of Linn County. The second most common style of housing in Robins is 2-story frame construction, which accounts for 14.3% of all

housing units. It is interesting that almost all of the split foyer and split level style of houses, which account for 88 units (6.9%), were built prior to 2000.

Table 18 presents information on the maximum, minimum, and average values of houses by style and time period. The value data for 1-story and 2-story frame houses provide the most meaningful indications of how housing values have changed over the past several decades. Because of the small numbers of houses for some styles and time periods the value statistics for those categories may not be indicative for units of those styles that may be built in the future. Also, a small number of high value houses can skew the average values for certain of the styles/time period combinations.

Table 18: Maximum, Mininum, and Average Value by Style and Period

House Styles	Value Indicators	Period Built			
		Before 1990	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2009	2010 - 2019
1-Story Frame	Minimum	\$64,800	\$131,900	\$161,600	\$89,800
	Maximum	\$421,200	\$550,600	\$1,173,800	\$546,600
	Average	\$186,586	\$267,598	\$368,494	\$351,228
1-Story Brick	Minimum	\$185,900	\$347,800	\$609,100	\$494,600
	Maximum	\$301,400	\$355,400	\$748,000	\$494,600
	Average	\$227,880	\$351,600	\$678,550	\$494,600
1 1/2-Story Frame	Minimum	\$78,200	\$247,300	\$571,700	
	Maximum	\$357,000	\$356,300	\$589,300	
	Average	\$198,044	\$302,167	\$580,500	
2-Story Frame	Minimum	\$80,100	\$185,000	\$236,700	\$297,800
	Maximum	\$544,800	\$640,300	\$1,013,600	\$594,200
	Average	\$228,544	\$326,735	\$455,776	\$408,967
2-Story Brick	Minimum	\$196,500		\$576,000	
	Maximum	\$234,200		\$576,000	
	Average	\$215,350		\$576,000	
Split Foyer Frame	Minimum	\$138,800	\$170,400	\$198,100	
	Maximum	\$282,400	\$249,200	\$225,300	
	Average	\$201,393	\$205,293	\$211,700	
Split Foyer Brick	Minimum	\$226,000			
	Maximum	\$226,000			
	Average	\$226,000			
Split Level	Minimum	\$121,400	\$156,900		
	Maximum	\$293,200	\$279,800		
	Average	\$200,520	\$222,675		

Table 19 presents counts of the number of houses of different sizes as measured by the number of bedrooms and by the period during which they were constructed. This analysis includes 1,275 of the 1,280 residential properties include in the Linn County Assessor's database. Five observations are excluded due to either a missing bedroom count or clearly erroneous data.

Table 19: Number of Houses by Bedrooms and Period

Number of Bedrooms	Period Built				All Years
	Before 1990	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2009	2010 - 2019	
1-Bedroom	8	1	0	2	11
2-Bedrooms	32	6	12	11	61
3-Bedrooms	197	87	58	43	385
4-Bedrooms	82	141	185	47	455
5-Bedrooms	25	40	189	62	316
6-Bedrooms	2	4	31	4	41
7-Bedrooms	1	0	4	1	6
All Houses	347	279	479	170	1,275

Over all periods the size distribution of houses is relatively evenly distributed among 3-bedroom (30.2%), 4-bedroom (35.7%), and 5-bedroom (24.8%) units. Small units (1- and 2-bedrooms) account for only 5.7% of housing units and large units (6- and 7-bedrooms) account for only 3.7% of all housing units in the city.

Looking at the house counts for the different periods does reveal a trend toward houses with more bedrooms. For example, 5-bedroom houses accounted for only 7.2% of all houses built prior to 1990. For houses built between 1990 and 1999, 5-bedroom house's share equaled 14.3%. For houses built between 2000 and 2009, 5-bedroom house's share equaled 39.5%. But the 5-bedroom share did decline slightly to 36.5% for the 2010 – 2019 construction period. This trend toward larger houses is interesting given that family sizes have generally gotten smaller over the past few decades. This may indicate a variety of changes in household structure including adult children continuing to live with their parent or elderly parents moving in with adult children. Alternatively, it may simply mean that the more affluent households that reside in Robins can afford to have one or more dedicated guest rooms or a bedroom used as a home office.

Table 20 presents minimum, maximum, and average values for houses built over the four time periods by number of bedrooms. One may logically expect that house values will increase with an increase in the number of bedrooms. This table does generally confirm this expectation. However, a small number of high value houses somewhat disrupts this relationship. For example, looking at houses constructed between 2000 and 2009, the average house value increases as the number of bedrooms increases except for the increment from 6 bedrooms to 7 bedrooms. The same is true for the other time periods. For each time period extreme maximum values appear to distort the relationship between average house value and number of bedrooms.

Table 20: Maximum, Minimum, and Average Value by Bedrooms and Period

Number of Bedrooms	Value Indicators	Period Built			
		Before 1990	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2009	2010 - 2019
1-Bedroom	Minimum	\$69,400	\$538,900		\$277,100
	Maximum	\$171,900	\$538,900		\$277,100
	Average	\$112,888	\$538,900		\$277,100
2-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$64,800	\$189,400	\$177,400	\$191,800
	Maximum	\$321,100	\$361,600	\$312,400	\$364,000
	Average	\$150,275	\$253,600	\$205,100	\$245,473
3-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$80,100	\$131,900	\$161,600	\$211,100
	Maximum	\$384,500	\$515,800	\$1,013,600	\$480,600
	Average	\$187,232	\$243,979	\$325,802	\$304,488
4-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$129,400	\$167,000	\$205,700	\$261,200
	Maximum	\$379,300	\$635,500	\$870,500	\$546,600
	Average	\$215,554	\$283,505	\$376,263	\$379,411
5-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$88,000	\$183,800	\$248,300	\$256,900
	Maximum	\$544,800	\$640,300	\$1,157,200	\$521,500
	Average	\$243,016	\$325,795	\$411,011	\$384,542
6-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$218,000	\$249,700	\$313,000	\$504,700
	Maximum	\$223,600	\$492,600	\$1,173,800	\$504,700
	Average	\$220,800	\$379,075	\$462,671	\$504,700
7-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$274,800		\$371,000	\$380,700
	Maximum	\$274,800		\$517,300	\$380,700
	Average	\$274,800		\$447,050	\$380,700

Another way of looking at the relationship between value and size is in terms of a house's livable area. Table 21 shows the number of houses built during each of the same four time periods as in the previous two parts of the analysis in relation to five house size categories. The five house size categories are livable space: (1) under 1,000 square feet, (2) 1,000 to 1,999 square feet, (3) 2,000 to 2,999 square feet, (4) 3,000 to 3,999 square feet, and (5) 4,000 square feet and over.

The counts of houses by time period and livable area reveal a growth in size over the first three periods, but then a reduction in size in the last period. Also, somewhat of a surprise, even though the amount of livable area does show an increase, most of the houses remain of relatively modest size. For the 174 houses built between 2010 and 2019, 98.9% have less than 3,000 square feet of livable area. For all of the time periods combined, 63.6% have livable area less than 2,000 square feet and 95.5% have livable area less than 3,000 square feet.

Looking at the value of houses for the different time period and house size combination, Table 22 shows, with only one exception, increases in average value as the amount of livable space increases. For example, for the 2000 – 2009 time period, the average house value goes from \$301,223 for a 1,000 to 1,999 square foot house, to \$417,669 for a 2,000 to 2,999 square foot house, to \$597,963 for a 3,000 to 3,999 square foot house, to \$903,909 for a house of 4,000 square feet and over.

Table 21: Number of Houses by Size (Sq. Ft.) and Period

Number of Bedrooms	Period Built				All Years
	Before 1990	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2009	2010 - 2019	
Under 1,000 Sq. Ft.	23	1	0	0	24
1,000 to 1,999 Sq. Ft.	282	172	219	117	790
2,000 to 2,999 Sq. Ft.	40	92	222	55	409
3,000 to 3,999 Sq. Ft.	3	14	27	2	46
4,000 Sq. Ft. and Over	0	0	11	0	11
All Houses	348	279	479	174	1,280

Table 22: Maximum, Minimum, and Average Value by Sq. Ft. and Period

Size in Sq. Ft.	Value Indicators	Period Built			
		Before 1990	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2009	2010 - 2019
Under 1,000 Sq. Ft.	Minimum	\$64,800	\$538,900		
	Maximum	\$421,200	\$538,900		
	Average	\$128,700	\$538,900		
1,000 to 1,999 Sq. Ft.	Minimum	\$80,100	\$131,900	\$161,600	\$89,800
	Maximum	\$321,100	\$334,500	\$472,600	\$452,200
	Average	\$187,062	\$231,028	\$301,223	\$321,609
2,000 to 2,999 Sq. Ft.	Minimum	\$169,300	\$224,100	\$236,700	\$277,100
	Maximum	\$384,500	\$550,600	\$830,700	\$546,600
	Average	\$264,358	\$332,837	\$417,669	\$412,969
3,000 to 3,999 Sq. Ft.	Minimum	\$327,200	\$340,400	\$382,000	\$494,600
	Maximum	\$544,800	\$640,300	\$850,500	\$594,200
	Average	\$399,733	\$493,736	\$597,963	\$544,400
4,000 Sq. Ft. and Over	Minimum			\$652,200	
	Maximum			\$1,173,800	
	Average			\$903,909	

This part of the analysis of housing for the City of Robins reveals several findings, which although probably not too surprising to the city's residents, are nevertheless significant in understanding the character of the city today and what changes have occurred over the past few decades.

- Houses located in the city are overwhelmingly single story and of frame construction.
- The size of houses, in terms of number of bedrooms, increased over the first three time periods. From the before 1990 time period to the 2000 – 2009 time period the share of houses with 4 or more bedrooms increased from 31.7% to 85.4%.
- During the most recent time period the share of houses with 4 or more bedrooms dropped back to 67.1% and the share with 3 bedrooms increased from 12.1% to 25.3%.

- Over the four time periods the average price of a 4-bedroom house increased from \$215,554 to \$379,411, or by 76.0%.
- The size of houses in terms of livable space did increase over the first three time periods. From the before 1990 time period to the 2000 – 2009 time period the share of houses with 3,000 or more square feet of livable area increased from 0.9% to 7.9%, but during the period since 2010 the share of houses with over 3,000 square feet dropped back to only 1.1%.
- The dominant size range for houses built since 2010 is between 1,000 and 1,999 square feet of livable space at 67.2%.
- Over the four time periods the value of houses did increase with size in terms of square feet, but the percentage increases in value were less for the largest houses. For houses of between 1,000 and 1,999 square feet the increase equaled 71.9%, for houses of between 2,000 and 2,999 square feet the increase equaled 56.2%, and for house of between 3,000 and 3,999 square feet the increase equaled 36.2%.

An understanding of a city's existing stock of housing has value for the planning of services and an understanding of the tax base available to pay for the services residents desire. To understand growth trends and prospects recent home construction and sales of existing and new homes provides additional valuable information for planning for the city's future.

Home Construction and Sales Analysis

The first part of this analysis looks at residential construction and sales activity in the City of Robins. The second part of the analysis provides comparisons to residential sales activity in the nearby Linn County suburbs of Hiawatha and Marion. The sales analysis uses data obtained from the Linn County Assessor and the Linn County GIS Division for the period from January 2015 through July 2019.

City of Robins Residential Construction and Sales Activity

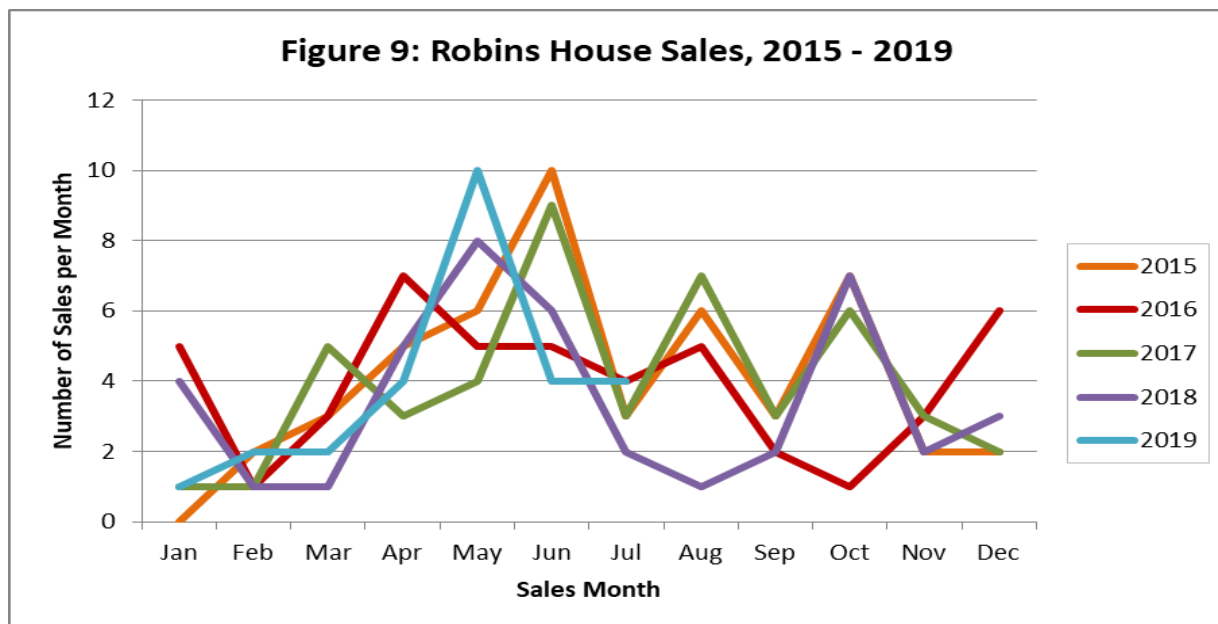
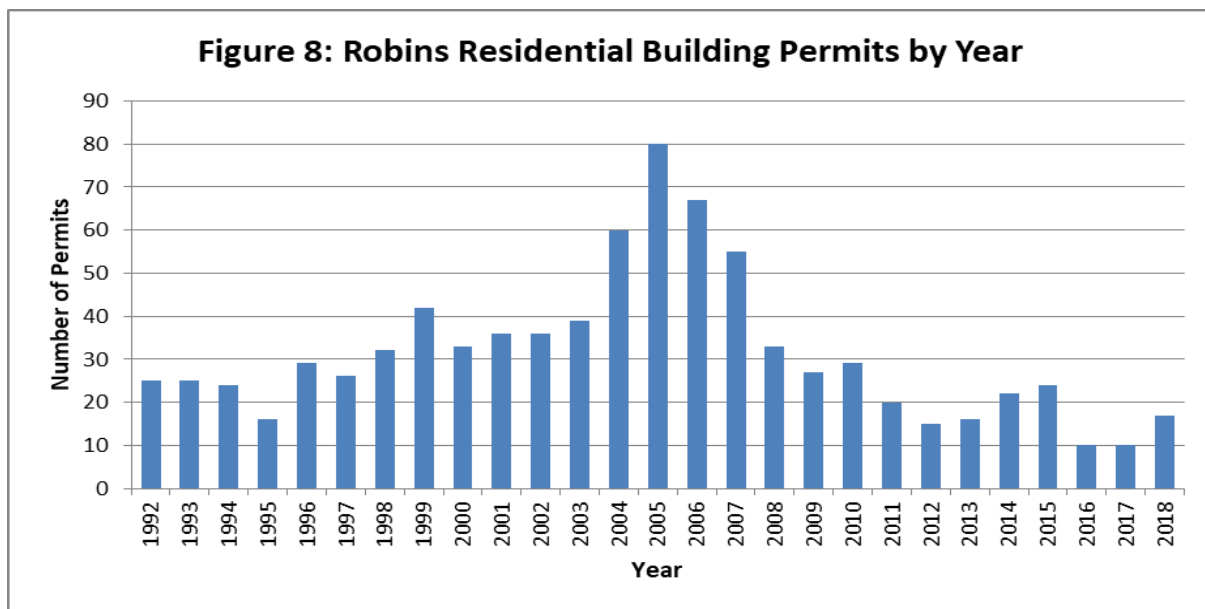
Figure 8 presents residential construction permit counts for the City of Robins dating back to 1992. Over the entire 27 year period the city issued an average of 31 permits per year. A peak of 80 permits were issued during 2005. Then, even before the last recession began, the number began to drop off failing to 67 in 2006, 55 in 2007, and 33 in 2008. During 2009 and 2010 the number of permits equaled 27 and 29. The low years for permits occurred during 2016 and 2017 when only 10 were issued each year. One possible reason that residential construction activity did not fall off earlier during the recession is the severe flooding that impacted Cedar Rapids during 2008. This may have resulted in some residents of the metropolitan area that were impacted by the flood moving to Robins.

The data on residential property sales obtained from the Linn County Assessor and the Linn County GIS Division provides more detailed information for the period from January 2015 through July 2019. Similar to the prior analysis of the city's total housing stock, the residential property sales data includes information on:

- Sale date,
- Sale type,
- Sale price,

- Assessed value for the year of the sale,
- House style,
- Number of bedrooms,
- Livable square footage, and
- Lot size.

The dataset obtained from the county consists of records for 313 unique properties. However, only 212 of the property title transfers represent actual, arms-length sales. Figure 9 presents house sales counts by year and month over the past four years and seven months.



The sales counts presented in Figure 9 shows a fairly typical pattern for house sales in Iowa. Sales generally peak during late spring and early summer. The lowest months for the closing of house sales are from November through March. However, the pattern of sale closings during 2016 seems to be an exception with a relatively large number during December.

Similar to the analysis presented previously, the following four tables present information on the relationship between house sales prices and house size. Table 23 presents information on the number of house sales by number of bedrooms by year. Table 24 presents information on the minimum, maximum, and average prices of houses sold by number of bedrooms by year.

Table 23: Number of Houses by Bedrooms and Year

Number of Bedrooms	Period					Total Sales
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
1-Bedroom	0	1	0	0	0	1
2-Bedrooms	2	2	3	2	1	10
3-Bedrooms	13	12	15	8	7	55
4-Bedrooms	18	18	15	14	7	72
5-Bedrooms	12	13	11	16	10	62
6-Bedrooms	2	0	3	1	1	7
7-Bedrooms	1	0	0	1	1	3
All Houses	48	46	47	42	27	210

Table 23 addresses only 210 of the house sales over the analysis period due to the bedroom count data missing for two of the transactions. The number of house sales has been relatively stable over the entire period. The number of sales averaged 47 from 2015 through 2017 and then dropped slightly during 2018 to 42. However, the sales pace for 2019 through July is consistent with 46 sales for the entire year.

The predominant house size over the analysis period is four bedrooms (34.3%). 3-bedroom (26.2%) and 5-bedroom (29.5%) houses account for slightly less sales. During 2018 and 2019 5-bedroom houses have been the most common size sold. 6-bedroom and 7-bedroom account for only 4.7% of total sales and 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom houses account for only 5.3% of total sales.

The sales price information presented in Table 24 is most meaningful for 3-, 4-, and 5-bedroom houses given that most house sales since the beginning of 2015 were of these sizes. For example, for 2018 sales the average 3-bedroom house sold for \$213,875, the average 4-bedroom house sold for \$285,129, and the average 5-bedroom house sold for \$319,761.

On the other hand, average sales prices do not show a consistent year-to-year increase as one may expect. For example, for 4-bedroom houses the average price increased by \$35,422 (13.5%) from 2015 to 2016 and by \$34,589 (11.6%) between 2016 and 2017, but then between 2017 and 2018 declined by \$47,371 (14.2%). Between 2018 and 2019 the average price again showed a modest increase rising by \$9,286 (3.3%).

Table 24: Maximum, Minimum, and Average Price by Bedrooms and Year

Number of Bedrooms	Value Indicators	Period				
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1-Bedroom	Minimum		\$75,000			
	Maximum		\$75,000			
	Average		\$75,000			
2-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$177,000	\$161,000	\$58,000	\$253,000	\$286,900
	Maximum	\$211,372	\$209,900	\$175,100	\$467,500	\$286,900
	Average	\$194,186	\$185,450	\$124,367	\$360,250	\$286,900
3-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$47,500	\$100,000	\$88,000	\$121,000	\$40,000
	Maximum	\$349,927	\$245,000	\$327,200	\$323,500	\$475,000
	Average	\$194,571	\$179,596	\$202,747	\$213,875	\$235,314
4-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$164,900	\$182,500	\$185,000	\$119,000	\$217,000
	Maximum	\$383,000	\$555,000	\$518,000	\$458,000	\$396,000
	Average	\$262,489	\$297,911	\$332,500	\$285,129	\$294,414
5-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$144,600	\$235,000	\$287,900	\$109,000	\$223,000
	Maximum	\$695,000	\$475,000	\$895,000	\$460,000	\$539,000
	Average	\$399,554	\$357,081	\$444,253	\$319,761	\$407,991
6-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$355,000		\$350,000	\$380,000	\$315,000
	Maximum	\$478,750		\$580,000	\$380,000	\$315,000
	Average	\$416,875		\$427,333	\$380,000	\$315,000
7-Bedrooms	Minimum	\$450,000			\$465,000	\$389,000
	Maximum	\$450,000			\$465,000	\$389,000
	Average	\$450,000			\$465,000	\$389,000

Tables 25 and 26 are similar to the prior two tables, except the size parameter is presented in terms of square feet of livable space rather than bedrooms. Table 25 shows over the entire analysis period that 141 (66.7%) of the 212 houses sold fall in the size range of from 2,000 to 2,999 square feet. Sixty other houses contained between 3,000 and 3,999 square feet of livable space. No houses with under 1,000 square feet and only seven with over 4,000 square feet sold during the period.

Table 25: Number of Houses Sold by Size (Sq. Ft.) and Year

Livable Space	Period					All Years
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Under 1,000 Sq. Ft.	0	0	0	0	0	0
1,000 to 1,999 Sq. Ft.	1	1	2	0	0	4
2,000 to 2,999 Sq. Ft.	32	34	27	30	18	141
3,000 to 3,999 Sq. Ft.	14	11	16	11	8	60
4,000 Sq. Ft. and Over	2	1	2	1	1	7
All Houses	49	47	47	42	27	212

Table 26: Maximum, Minimum, and Average Price by Sq. Ft. and Year

Livable Space	Value Indicators	Period				
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1,000 to 1,999 Sq. Ft.	Minimum	\$153,000	\$75,000	\$58,000		
	Maximum	\$153,000	\$75,000	\$123,000		
	Average	\$153,000	\$75,000	\$90,500		
2,000 to 2,999 Sq. Ft.	Minimum	\$47,500	\$81,180	\$88,000	\$109,000	\$40,000
	Maximum	\$365,000	\$490,000	\$465,000	\$467,500	\$499,510
	Average	\$227,674	\$237,417	\$246,577	\$265,791	\$292,712
3,000 to 3,999 Sq. Ft.	Minimum	\$230,000	\$256,000	\$270,000	\$230,000	\$251,200
	Maximum	\$525,478	\$555,000	\$595,000	\$460,000	\$475,000
	Average	\$374,278	\$371,773	\$391,063	\$358,705	\$371,388
4,000 Sq. Ft. and Over	Minimum	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$580,000	\$465,000	\$539,000
	Maximum	\$695,000	\$450,000	\$895,000	\$465,000	\$539,000
	Average	\$572,500	\$450,000	\$737,500	\$465,000	\$539,000

As one would expect, the average house price increases with size. For example, for houses sold during 2018, the average price of a 2,000 to 2,999 square foot house equaled \$265,791. For a 3,000 to 3,999 square foot house the average price increased by \$92,914 (35.0%) to \$358,705. Then, moving up to houses with over 4,000 square feet the price increased by another \$106,295 (29.6%) to \$465,000.

To put the character of housing in the City of Robins in perspective, the next section of this report makes comparisons to house sales in Hiawatha and Marion.

House Sales Comparisons for Robins, Hiawatha, and Marion

Robins is the smallest of the three main Cedar Rapids suburbs with a population of 3,492 residing in 1,209 households. By comparison, according to 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, Hiawatha and Marion have populations of 7,393 and 39,979, which occupy 2,945 and 15,232 households, respectively.

Over the period from January 2015 through July 2019 the number of houses sold in the three cities equaled 210 in Robins, 492 in Hiawatha, and 4,281 in Marion. Over this period the ratios of house sales to total households equal 17.4% for Robins, 16.7% for Hiawatha, and 28.1% for Marion. The house sales to number of households ratios indicate that Robins and Hiawatha have similar turnover rates, while the turnover rate for Marion is about two-thirds higher.

As Figure 10 shows, houses sold in Robins have tended to have more bedrooms than houses sold in the other two suburbs. 68.6% of houses sold in Robins had four or more bedrooms. Similar size houses equaled 42.3% of Hiawatha house sales and 37.8% of Marion house sales. Figure 11 makes a similar presentation of the shares of houses sold since January 2015 by size measured in terms of livable space. This figure shows that almost none (only 1.9%) of the houses sold in Robins had less than 2,000 square feet. Under 2,000 square feet houses sold in Hiawatha equaled 87.8% and in Marion equaled 88.4%.

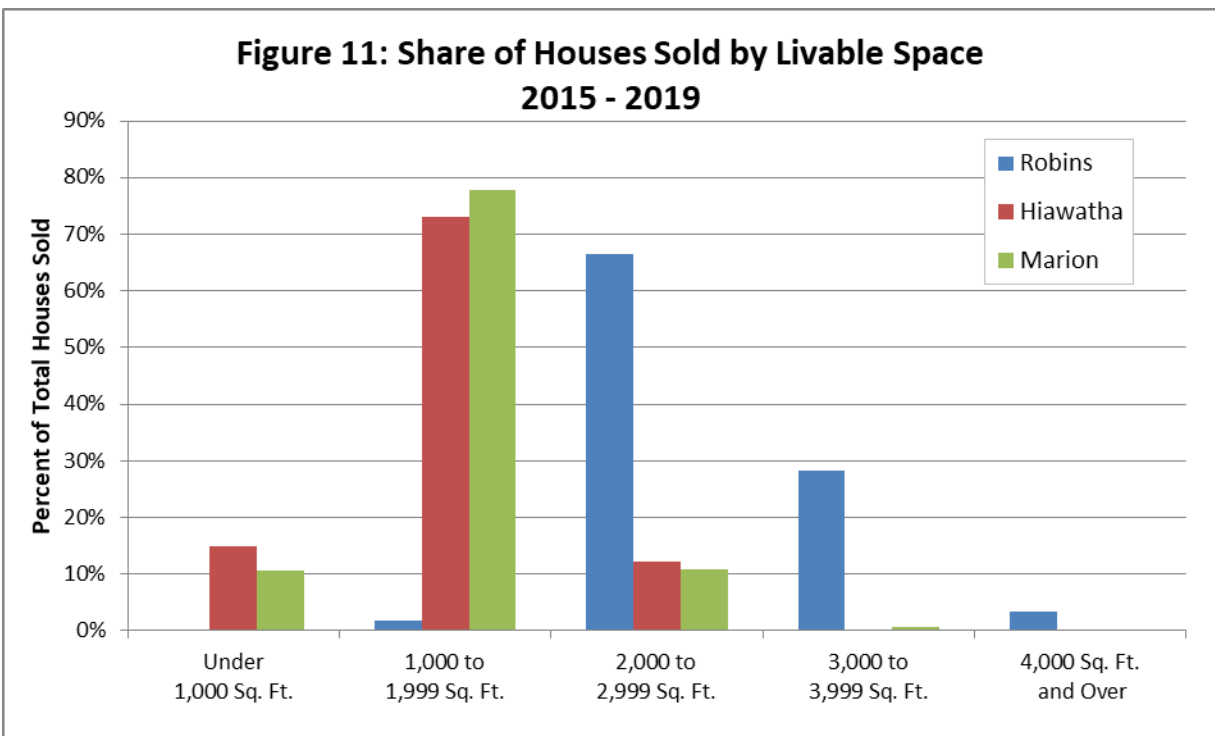
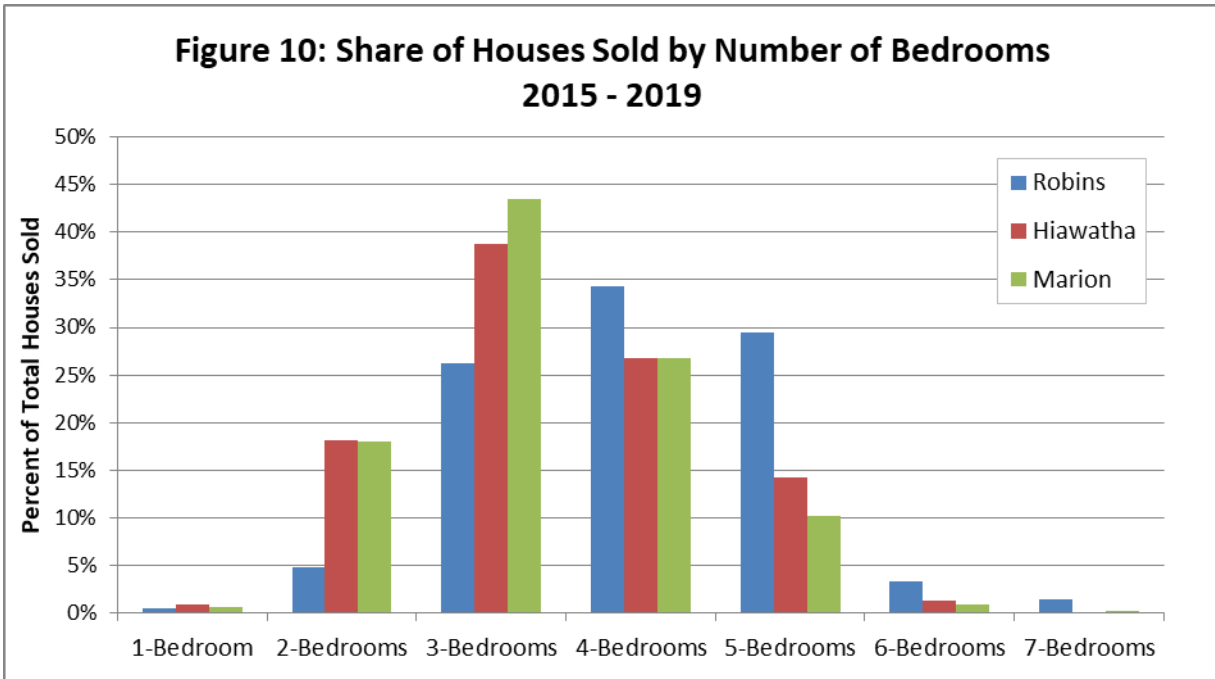


Table 27 presents the numbers of houses sold and the average sales prices for Robins, Hiawatha, and Marion by number of bedrooms for the period from January 2015 through July 2019. Table 28 provides a similar presentation for house sales by amount of livable space.

Table 27: Number and Average Price by Number of Bedrooms, 2015 - 2019

Number of Bedrooms	Robins		Hiawatha		Marion	
	Number	Price	Number	Price	Number	Price
1-Bedroom	1	\$75,000	4	\$295,700	26	\$137,473
2-Bedrooms	10	\$213,977	89	\$123,077	773	\$127,754
3-Bedrooms	55	\$201,527	191	\$181,545	1,862	\$168,367
4-Bedrooms	72	\$293,436	132	\$236,993	1,146	\$225,521
5-Bedrooms	62	\$379,348	70	\$286,614	437	\$308,477
6-Bedrooms	7	\$401,536	6	\$350,242	35	\$378,530
7-Bedrooms	3	\$434,667	0	NM	2	\$497,592
Totals	210	\$293,604	492	\$203,779	4,281	\$194,189

Table 28: Number and Average Price by Livable Space (Sq. Ft.), 2015 - 2019

Size in Sq. Ft.	Robins		Hiawatha		Marion	
	Number	Price	Number	Price	Number	Price
Under 1,000 Sq. Ft.	0	NM	73	\$129,319	461	\$114,686
1,000 to 1,999 Sq. Ft.	4	\$102,250	359	\$202,189	3,356	\$189,158
2,000 to 2,999 Sq. Ft.	141	\$250,056	60	\$303,888	470	\$289,971
3,000 to 3,999 Sq. Ft.	60	\$375,054	0	NM	28	\$474,643
4,000 Sq. Ft. and Over	7	\$582,000	0	NM	2	\$525,755
Total	212	\$293,604	492	\$203,779	4,317	\$194,189

Both tables show that the average price of all house sales in Robins equaled \$293,604. This price was \$89,825 (44.1%) higher than for Hiawatha and \$99,415 (51.2%) higher than for Marion.

One final comparison that illustrates the differences among the residential property located in the three cities is the taxable valuation for this class of property. For assessment year 2018 (with taxes due during 2019 and 2020) the amounts of taxable residential property located in Robins equaled \$199.1 million; for Hiawatha, \$203.5 million; and for Marion, \$1,343.6 million. This comparison shows that even though Robins has less than half the population and household units than Hiawatha, the taxable values for their residential property are almost equal. But even with a relatively high residential tax base Robins total tax base for property tax totals only \$222.4 million. This means that the financial resources available to fund capital improvements and public services rest mainly on residential property. The next section of the report investigates the number and types of businesses located in Robins and possible opportunities to expand these activities within the city.

Retail Trade and Other Business Analysis

Four data sources were used to identify businesses and business properties located in the City of Robins. These data sources include:

- Iowa Department of Revenue Sales Tax Registrations
- Iowa Secretary of State Business Entity Registrations
- Linn County Assessor
- Google Maps

The first section of this analysis focuses on retail trade and service businesses that are required to obtain state sales tax permits. The second section addresses other businesses. The third section looks at commercial property.

Retail Trade Analysis

Many businesses that are not traditional retailers, such as building contractors, wholesalers, and manufacturers with direct sales to consumers, are required to have state sales tax permits. In addition, many holders of sales tax permits provide services rather than sell physical goods. Also, many sales tax permit holders run businesses out of their homes.

According to the Iowa Department of Revenue (IowaDOR) only 85 businesses and organizations located in the City of Robins have active sales tax permits. A check of addresses for permit holders located in the City of Robins using Google Maps revealed that 62 appear to be home-based businesses. Three others may also be home-based businesses as both residential and commercial type structures appear to be located at these permitted addresses. Among the home-based businesses 34 are classified as retailers and 18 are classified as personal and business service providers. Also, there are 4 arts, entertainment, and food service businesses, 3 contractors, 2 manufacturers, and 1 wholesaler.

For the 20 permit holders located in commercial structures, 8 are classified as retail establishments, 2 as restaurants, 6 as personal and business service providers, 1 as a medical service provider, 1 as a mining company, 1 as an electrical contractor, and 1 as a public entity.

Beyond counts of the different types of businesses that hold sales tax permits, the amount of taxable sales reported by these businesses provides another indication of the amount of retail trade and taxable services provided by businesses located in the City of Robins. Figure 11 shows annual taxable sales totals for businesses located in Robins from 2000 through 2018. In 2000, taxable sales by Robins' businesses totaled \$2.3 million. During 2018 taxable sales equaled \$8.8, which equals \$6.5 million (283.9%) growth over the eighteen years. Over this same period the population of Robins increased by 86.9% and consumer prices increased by 45.8%. This means that after adjusting for population growth and the rise in consumer prices taxable sales by Robins' businesses increased by 40 percent over the eighteen years.

To put taxable sales by Robins' businesses in perspective, Table 29 provides taxable sales for all Linn County cities for 2018. Robins only accounts for about 0.2% of the countywide total of \$3,927.5 million.

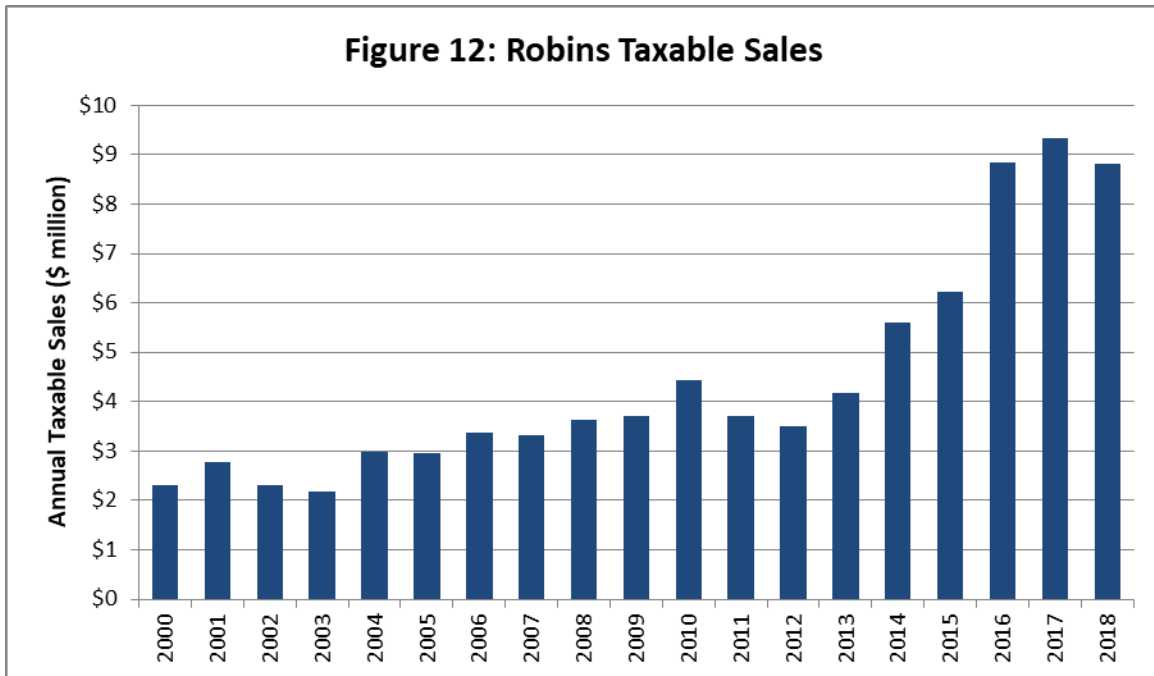


Table 29: Taxable Sales by Linn County Jurisdiction, 2018

City	Taxable Sales				
	2018Q1	2018Q2	2018Q3	2018Q4	CY2018
Cedar Rapids	\$746,893,123	\$811,309,548	\$835,510,123	\$823,175,374	\$3,216,888,168
Marion	\$78,204,887	\$101,723,831	\$99,338,689	\$98,565,216	\$377,832,623
Hiawatha	\$31,275,199	\$38,113,394	\$37,860,601	\$36,085,041	\$143,334,235
Mount Vernon	\$6,742,141	\$9,585,728	\$9,376,800	\$8,915,850	\$34,620,519
Center Point	\$4,592,187	\$5,507,142	\$5,371,050	\$5,108,097	\$20,578,476
Fairfax	\$3,284,664	\$4,219,201	\$4,185,612	\$3,792,903	\$15,482,380
Central City	\$1,438,465	\$1,996,678	\$2,016,456	\$1,974,268	\$7,425,867
Lisbon	\$2,742,554	\$3,436,080	\$4,144,462	\$3,353,462	\$13,676,558
Ely	\$1,747,170	\$2,156,133	\$2,364,221	\$2,101,341	\$8,368,865
Springville	\$1,513,631	\$2,710,580	\$2,983,374	\$2,490,563	\$9,698,148
Palo	\$2,737,957	\$16,555,524	\$12,930,223	\$10,086,844	\$42,310,548
Robins	\$1,386,867	\$2,394,776	\$2,537,736	\$2,507,166	\$8,826,545
Walker	\$1,220,166	\$2,747,084	\$2,849,812	\$3,207,664	\$10,024,726
Coggon	\$1,285,752	\$1,731,475	\$1,465,977	\$1,306,444	\$5,789,648
Alburnett	\$571,935	\$633,937	\$597,892	\$776,991	\$2,580,755
Walford	\$687,857	\$745,409	\$796,859	\$853,342	\$3,083,467
Prairieburg	NA	NA	NA	\$591,584	\$591,584
Other	\$1,982,694	\$2,608,004	\$1,077,487	\$695,538	\$6,363,723
Total County	\$888,307,249	\$1,008,174,524	\$1,025,407,374	\$1,005,587,688	\$3,927,476,835

Another way of obtaining a sense of the amount of retail and service business activity Robins may be able to support is by looking at other cities with comparable populations. Table 30 presents taxable sales per number of businesses with active sales tax permits and per capita. Robins is compared to nine other Iowa cities with populations between 3,223 and 3,731. Robins estimated 2018 population equals 3,492.

Table 30: Taxable Sales Comparisons for Similar Size Cities, 2018

City	Population	Sales Tax Permits	Taxable Sales	Taxable Sales/Permit	Taxable Sales/Capita
Albia	3,731	289	\$34,954,764	\$120,951	\$9,369
Eagle Grove	3,417	160	\$27,506,543	\$171,916	\$8,050
Emmetsburg	3,713	245	\$41,352,188	\$168,784	\$11,137
New Hampton	3,394	321	\$65,678,003	\$204,604	\$19,351
Osage	3,547	307	\$46,436,640	\$151,259	\$13,092
Robins	3,492	86	\$8,826,545	\$102,634	\$2,528
Story City	3,370	248	\$34,392,350	\$138,679	\$10,205
Tiffin	3,547	97	\$12,620,559	\$130,109	\$3,558
Tipton	3,223	274	\$73,519,119	\$268,318	\$22,811
Waukon	3,683	368	\$66,195,669	\$179,880	\$17,973

This comparison shows that Robins had only \$2,528 of taxable sales per capita in 2018. The city with the next lowest per capita taxable sales was Tiffin at \$3,558. Both Robins and Tiffin are metropolitan area suburbs. The other eight cities had taxable sales between \$8,050 (Eagle Grove) and \$22,811 (Tipton). The nature and amount of nearby shopping opportunities no doubt has an impact on the amounts of taxable sales that occur in the other cities. For example, of the ten cities in the comparison, Tipton has the highest sales per capita at \$22,811. One likely reason for this relatively high amount of sales is that the closest city of significant size that offers alternative shopping opportunities is Mount Vernon, which is 24 miles, or about 28 minutes driving time, away from Tipton. Statewide taxable sales per capita equaled \$12,633 during 2018.

In addition to population, differences in household income contributes to variation in the amount of taxable sales among the ten cities. Households located in the City of Robins have considerably higher median household income than do the other nine similar size cities. The median household income for Robins equals \$120,938. Among the nine comparison cities Tiffin has the next highest median household income at \$67,650. Robins' median household income is high compared to other high income cities in Iowa. For example, among the suburbs of Des Moines, Clive has the highest median household income at \$94,907. The median household incomes for Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, and Marion are \$56,828, \$69,882, and \$43,280, respectively.

Table 31 shows taxable sales per million dollars of total household income for Robins and for the nine similar size comparison cities. Also, the table shows the number of active sales tax permits per million dollars of total household income for the ten cities.

Table 31: Retail Trade to Household Income Comparisons, 2018

City	Household Income	Sales Tax Permits	Taxable Sales	Taxable Sales/ \$ Million	Sales Tax Permits/ \$ Million
Albia	\$86,850,540	289	\$34,954,764	\$402,470	3.33
Eagle Grove	\$92,142,240	160	\$27,506,543	\$298,523	1.74
Emmetsburg	\$102,312,946	245	\$41,352,188	\$404,174	2.39
New Hampton	\$86,495,035	321	\$65,678,003	\$759,327	3.71
Osage	\$94,147,396	307	\$46,436,640	\$493,233	3.26
Robins	\$182,104,416	86	\$8,826,545	\$48,470	0.47
Story City	\$99,038,395	248	\$34,392,350	\$347,263	2.50
Tiffin	\$78,960,506	97	\$12,620,559	\$159,834	1.23
Tipton	\$81,526,815	274	\$73,519,119	\$901,778	3.36
Waukon	\$103,979,656	368	\$66,195,669	\$636,621	3.54

As Table 31 shows, taxable sales per million dollars of household income equals only \$48,470 for Robins, while for Tiffin, the other suburb among the comparison group, the ratio equaled \$159,834. For the other cities the ratio ranges from \$298,523 (Eagle Grove) to \$901,778 (Tipton).

Similarly, the above table presents a comparison for Robins and the nine other cities in terms of the number of businesses with active sales tax permits per million dollars of household income. Robins' ratio for this metric equals only 0.47, while for Tiffin the ratio equals 1.23 and for the other eight cities the ratios range from 1.74 (Eagle Grove) to 3.71 (New Hampton).

Because Robins is part of a metropolitan area it does not need to be as self-contained commercially as do stand-alone cities of similar size. Nevertheless, Robins can very likely support additional retail and service businesses. Insights into what types of businesses could be supported by the community can be gained by looking at neighborhood type shopping areas in Iowa's metropolitan areas. Types of businesses that tend to locate in neighborhood centers include:

- Barber shops, hair stylists, and spas
- Nail salons
- Pet supply stores and grooming salons
- Card and gift shops
- Craft supply and hobby stores
- Art galleries
- Boutique furniture stores and furniture repair shops
- Interior design studios
- Convenience stores
- Bicycle shops
- Small hardware stores
- Accountants, bookkeepers, and tax preparers
- Insurance brokers

- Real estate brokers
- Branch banks
- Tutoring services
- Exercise clubs and dance studios
- Diet and health centers
- Drug Stores
- Dental clinics
- Chiropractic clinics
- Optometrists and eyewear stores
- Veterinary clinics
- Dry cleaners and tailor shops
- Pizza restaurants
- Ethnic food restaurants (Chinese, Mexican, Indian, etc.)
- Casual dining restaurants
- Wine stores
- Brew pubs
- Specialty food stores
- Drug stores

This is not an exhaustive list of the types of businesses that locate in neighborhood commercial areas, but it does provide a sufficient number of examples to provide guidance as to the types of businesses the community may wish to attract.

Other Business Activity

The Iowa Secretary of State's (IowaSOS) business entity registration list contains 149 businesses and non-profit organizations with Robins addresses. Using Google Maps to check each of the addresses, it appears that at least 113 (75.8%) are home-based businesses. Only 18 of these businesses and non-profit organizations have active sales tax permits.

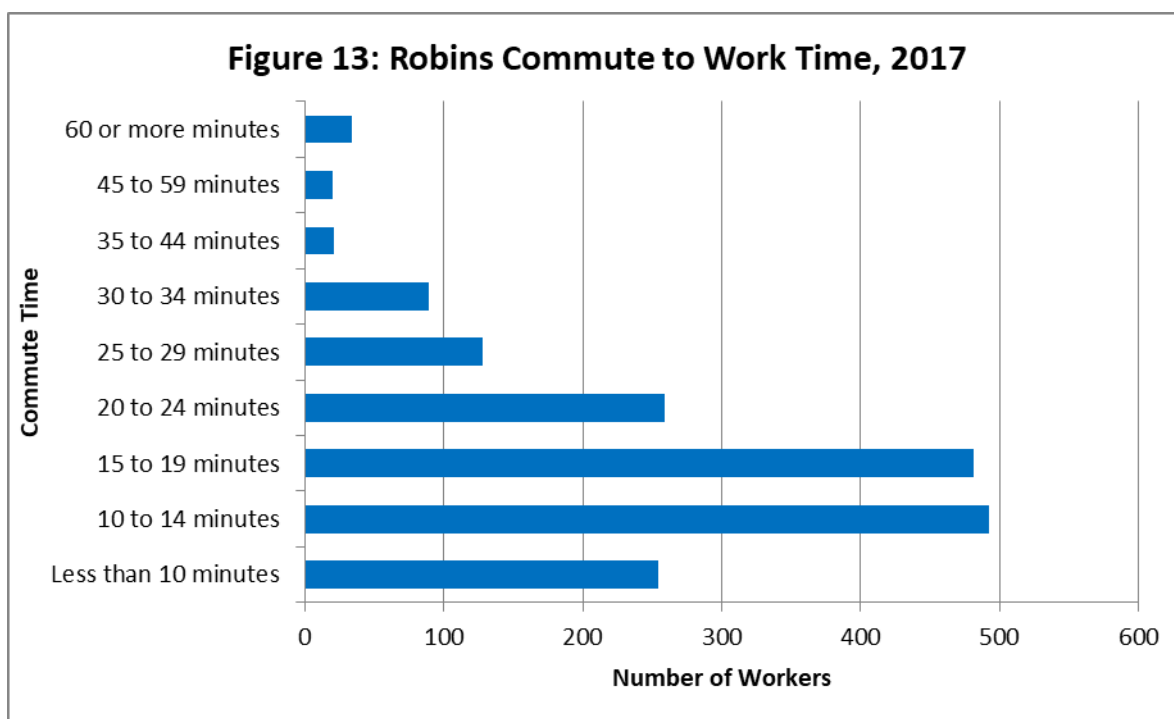
The IowaSOS registration information does not reveal the type of business. However, for many of the businesses the name on the registration does provide some indication of business type. Among the businesses with revealing names four categories of businesses are prominent – investment management, property management, construction contracting, and farming.

There is no current comprehensive source of data on businesses located in the city of Robins. The U.S. Census does conduct economic censuses every five years and all businesses are required to complete these census questionnaires. However, there is a considerable time lag between when the census is conducted and the data are released. The most recent economic census data for the City of Robins is from the year 2012. The 2017 economic census data are scheduled for release during 2020.

According to the 2012 economic census there were 197 businesses located in Robins, but only 29 of these businesses had employees other than the owners. These 29 businesses employed between 100 and 249 workers. The industry breakdown for the 197 businesses included 25 construction companies, 54 retailers, 71 professional, scientific and technical service companies, and 47 other businesses.

Although seven years have elapsed since the 2012 economic census, the current information from the Iowa Secretary of State and the Iowa Department of Revenue are relatively consistent with the census information. The IowaSOS data identifies 149 business and non-profit entities and the IowaDOR sales tax registration data identifies 85 permit holders. Eighteen companies are included in both datasets. This means the two lists include 216 unique businesses and non-profits. This is only nineteen more than the 2012 census business count.

The fact is most of Robins' residents that are in the labor force work outside the city. According to the American Community Survey estimates for Robins, during 2017 the city's workforce totaled 1,840 individuals. Of the city's total workforce 1,776 (96.5%) were identified as working outside their homes. Figure 13 shows the distribution of these workers by the amount of time it takes them to commute to work.



For 90.9% of Robins' residents employed outside their homes the daily commute to work takes less than 30 minutes. The average commute time for Robins' residents equals 16.5 minutes. This implies that almost all of the city's residents work in the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area. It does not appear that many Robins' residents commute to Iowa City for work as that trip takes an average of 47 minutes.

Business Analysis Summary

The City of Robins consists primarily of residential property. The review of Iowa Secretary of State and Iowa Department of Revenue registration databases reveal 216 unique businesses and non-profits are located in the city. But over three-quarters of these entities appear to be home-based businesses and

many are likely not the owners' primary source of income. Another measure of the relatively small business imprint on the community is the fact that only 7.0% of the assessed value of real property located in Robins is classified by the Linn County Assessor as commercial property and no property is classified as industrial property.

On the other hand, the high incomes of the city's residents provide substantial opportunities for attracting retail and service businesses to Robins. A sense of what types of businesses may be attracted to the city can be gained by studying neighborhood retail and service centers located elsewhere in the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area and in other metropolitan areas of the state. Examples of neighborhood commercial developments are presented below.

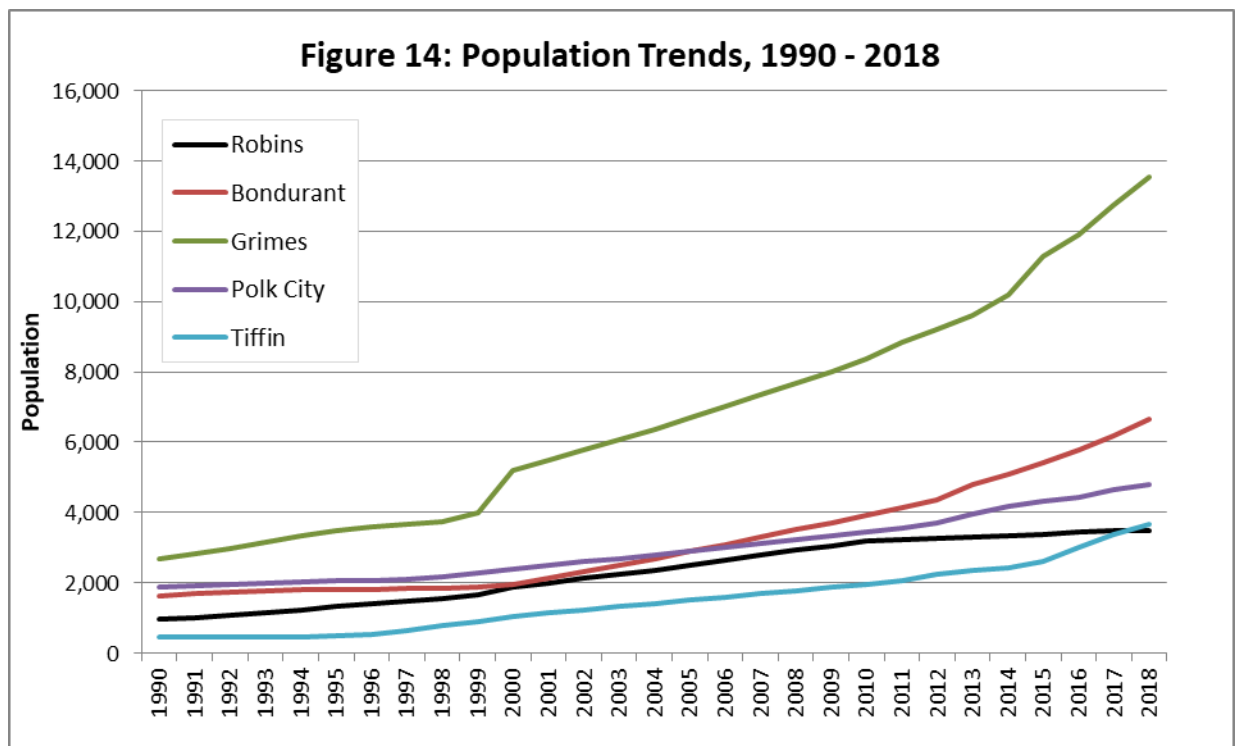


Comparison Communities

Although population growth in the City of Robins has slowed compared to what was experienced during the 1990s (95.0%) and the 2000s (70.1%), its rate of growth since 2010 (9.9%) still ranks as the 49th highest among the state's 943 cities. With the proposed new I-380 interchange at Tower Terrace Road scheduled for construction during 2022 and the availability of over 1,800 acres of agricultural and undeveloped land within the city limits, Robins has considerable potential for growth over the next couple of decades.

Comparison Cities Population Trends and Characteristics

As Robins plans for future growth it needs to develop an understanding of what investments in infrastructure and services it will need to make. One way to gain an understanding of these future needs is to look to other similar cities that are a little ahead of it on the growth curve. For this analysis four small, high growth metropolitan area suburbs have been chosen for comparison. These cities are Bondurant, Grimes, Polk City, and Tiffin. Figure 14 shows the population growth for Robins and the other four cities from 1990 through 2018.



In 1990, the populations of the five cities were approximately equal ranging from 458 (Tiffin) to 2,687 (Grimes). Robins' population that year equaled 958. Since then Grimes has experienced explosive growth and the growth rates for Bondurant and Polk City have also accelerated. Also, Tiffin's population

has caught up to Robins' population. Table 32 summarizes population and population changes by decade since 1990.

Table 32: Comparison Cities Population Trends

Population	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
1990	958	1,610	2,687	1,885	458
2000	1,868	1,932	5,197	2,399	1,049
2010	3,177	3,924	8,366	3,453	1,965
2018	3,492	6,646	13,562	4,809	3,670
Population Change					
1990 - 2000	910	322	2,510	514	591
2000 - 2010	1,309	1,992	3,169	1,054	916
2010 - 2018	315	2,722	5,196	1,356	1,705
Population %Change					
1990 - 2000	95.0%	20.0%	93.4%	27.3%	129.0%
2000 - 2010	70.1%	103.1%	61.0%	43.9%	87.3%
2010 - 2018	9.9%	69.4%	62.1%	39.3%	86.8%

Many factors influence the rates of population growth experienced by the five cities. Location, household income, highway access, and city area are a few of the characteristics that impact growth. A summary of a variety of characteristics for the five cities is provided in Table 33.

Table 33: Comparison Cities Characteristics, 2017

Characteristic	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Population	3,467	6,175	12,734	4,633	3,359
Number of Households	1,209	1,812	4,107	1,370	1,093
Average Persons per Household	2.9	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.1
Median Household Income	\$120,938	\$75,357	\$92,250	\$92,188	\$67,650
Mean Household Income	\$150,624	\$80,579	\$99,946	\$105,890	\$72,242
Total Household Income (\$ Mil)	\$182.1	\$146.0	\$410.5	\$145.1	\$79.0
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	1170	1571	3120	1139	695
Rental Housing Units	39	241	987	231	398
Median House Value	\$286,700	\$180,600	\$199,700	\$226,700	\$203,900
Taxable Retail Sales (\$ Mil), 2018	\$8.8	\$23.3	\$274.5	\$22.6	\$12.6
Area (sq. mi.)	5.84	8.40	11.87	4.47	4.14

Robins varies from the other cities in a number of ways. First, its median household income is \$28,688 (31.1%) higher than that of the city (Grimes) with the next highest median income. Only 3.2% of Robins' occupied housing units are rentals. The city with the next lowest share of rentals is Bondurant at 13.3%. The median value of owner-occupied houses in Robins is \$286,700, which is \$60,000 (26.5%) above the second highest median value for houses in Polk City. Residents of Robins have the second highest total household income (\$182.1 million), but the lowest amount of taxable sales (\$8.8 million) among the five cities.

Comparison Cities Tax Bases and Budgets

What investments and programs a city may undertake and the numbers of staff that may be employed depend on the financial resources the city has at its disposal. For most cities property taxes account for half or more of budget revenues. For smaller cities residential property generally provides the largest share of property taxes, but as cities grow commercial and industrial property gain greater importance for the tax base. Also, as cities grow the distribution of expenditures across budget activities changes.

This section of the analysis begins with a comparison of the property tax bases for Robins and the four comparison cities. Next, other revenue sources are added to the comparison. Third, how the five cities compare in terms of expenditures on different types of services are addressed.

Property Tax Comparisons

The amount of property tax that a city collects depends on several factors and are determined through a multi-step process. First, county or city assessors estimate the value of real properties located within their jurisdictions. Under Iowa law properties are supposed to be assessed at market value. Second, depending on the classification of the property (i.e., agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, etc.), Iowa law specifies different percentages of the properties' values that are taxable. For example, for 2018 assessments only 56.9% of residential properties' values are taxable, whereas the taxable percentage for commercial property equals 90.0%. Third, local governments (i.e., cities, counties, school districts, airport authorities, community colleges, etc.) that have authority over the area where a property is located determine tax levy rates that are applied to the taxable valuations. The sum of the applicable rates results in the consolidated tax rate that applies to a specific parcel of real property.

Other factors may also impact the amount of property tax collected by a local government. Certain types of property are exempted from taxation. Examples include property owned by religious organizations, units of government, educational institutions, public and non-profit hospitals, and cemeteries. Municipalities may also grant exemptions or tax abatements as part of an economic development incentive package. In addition, partial exemptions are granted to homeowners for their primary residence and to military veterans.

The comparison of property taxes for the City of Robins with the four comparison cities begins with assessment year 2018 taxable valuations by classification, which is presented in Table 34. The total taxable value for Robins equals \$222.4 million. The taxable values for the other four cities range between \$209.2 million for Tiffin to \$904.2 million for Grimes. Residential property is the dominant classification for all of the cities. For Robins the residential classification accounts for 89.4% of the total

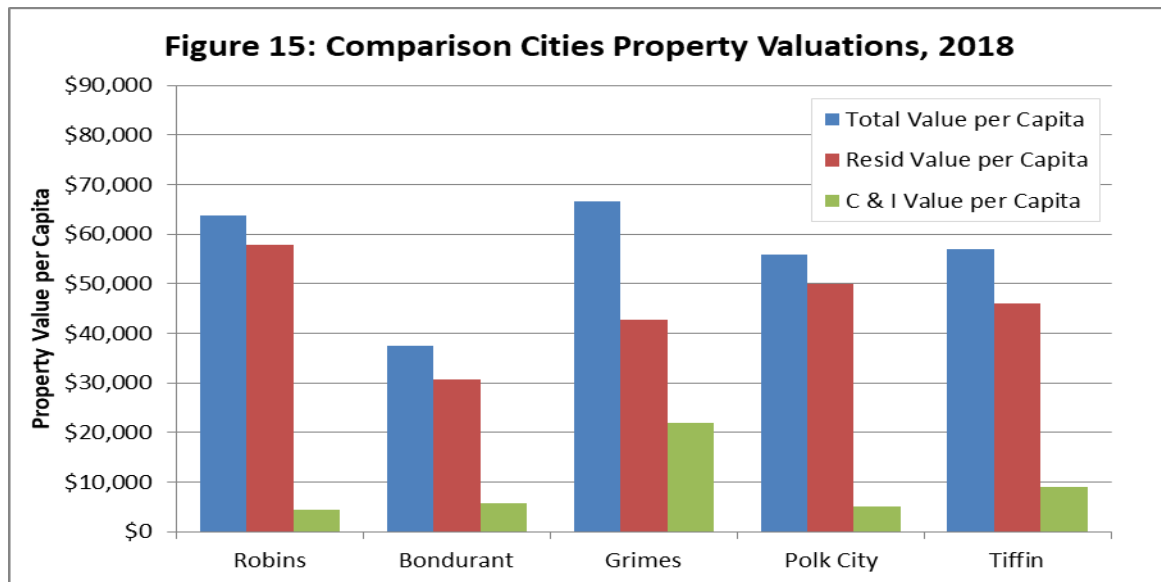
tax base. As Table 35 shows, the residential classification accounts for 79.0% or more of total taxable value for three of the other cities. However, for Grimes, the largest of the other cities, residential property accounts for only 61.6% of the total and it has a much higher share (28.5%) of commercial property.

Table 34: Comparison Cities Property Values by Classification, 2018

Property Classification	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Residential	\$198,729,205	\$200,680,500	\$557,142,551	\$238,989,397	\$165,330,179
Multiresidential	\$3,302,858	\$3,183,750	\$23,210,649	\$1,720,838	\$3,226,823
Ag Land and Buildings	\$2,356,747	\$3,523,238	\$3,705,517	\$538,333	\$795,351
Commercial	\$15,482,871	\$35,426,250	\$257,558,589	\$24,540,489	\$32,747,437
Industrial	\$0	\$2,901,600	\$40,957,911	\$0	\$0
Other	\$2,518,595	\$2,624,585	\$21,608,401	\$2,731,423	\$7,100,913
Total	\$222,390,276	\$248,339,923	\$904,183,618	\$268,520,480	\$209,200,703

Table 35: Comparison Cities Property Value Shares by Classification, 2018

Property Classification	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Residential	89.4%	80.8%	61.6%	89.0%	79.0%
Multiresidential	1.5%	1.3%	2.6%	0.6%	1.5%
Ag Land and Buildings	1.1%	1.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%
Commercial	7.0%	14.3%	28.5%	9.1%	15.7%
Industrial	0.0%	1.2%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1.1%	1.1%	2.4%	1.0%	3.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Because the cities are of different sizes, it is more meaningful to compare the valuations for residential, commercial and industrial combined, and all real property on a per capita basis. This comparison is shown in Figure 15. Here it can be seen that for residential property taxable value per capita for Robins (\$57,856) is the highest among the five cities. The city with the next highest taxable value per capita for residential property is Polk City (\$50,054). For commercial and industrial property Grimes has the highest valuation per capita equaling \$22,011 and Tiffin has the next highest valuation at \$8,923. Commercial and industrial property in Robins has a taxable value of only \$4,434 per capita, which is the lowest among the five cities.

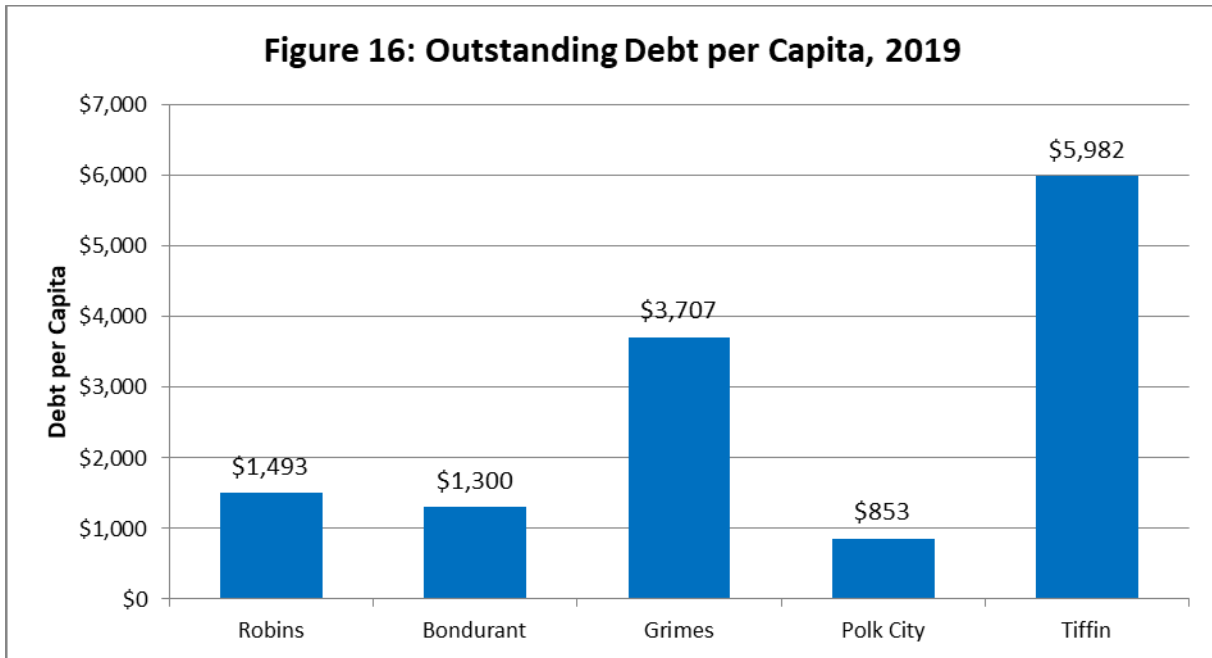
To arrive at the amount of revenue derived from property tax local government jurisdictions apply levy rates adopted by their respective boards and councils. City levy rates consist of a number of components. Some of the levy components have maximums set by state law, such as the general levy limit for cities is \$8.10 per \$1,000 of taxable value. Table 36 summarizes levy rates for the five cities.

Table 36: Comparison Cities Property Tax Levy Rates, 2020

Levy Categories	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Regular General Levy	\$6.87920	\$8.10000	\$8.10000	\$8.10000	\$8.10000
Aviation Authority Levy	\$0.00000	\$0.14996	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000
Insurance Levy	\$0.00000	\$0.25105	\$0.26663	\$0.49134	\$0.22513
Emergency Mgmt Levy	\$0.00000	\$0.01210	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00593
Public Library Levy	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.10000
Emergency Levy	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.27000	\$0.00000	\$0.27000
Police & Fire Retirement Levy	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000
FICA & IPERS Levy	\$0.00000	\$1.11659	\$0.77088	\$0.00000	\$0.41756
Other Employee Benefits Levy	\$0.00000	\$1.18012	\$1.24445	\$0.00000	\$0.57883
Debt Service Levy	\$0.83216	\$2.92567	\$2.16097	\$1.32093	\$2.10944
Capital Projects Levy	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000	\$0.00000
Total City Levy	\$7.71136	\$13.73549	\$12.81293	\$9.91227	\$11.80689

As Table 36 shows Robins has the lowest total city levy rate among the five cities. It is the only one of the five cities that has a Regular General Levy rate below the \$8.10 limit. Because Robins Regular General Levy is below the limit this means it has no additional levy for Emergency purposes or for FICA and IPERS contributions. Also, Robins' Debt Service Levy rate is substantially below the levy rates of the other cities.

Figure 16 shows the debt outstanding for each of the five cities on a per capita basis. Robins' debt per capita is in the middle of the group at \$1,493. Polk City has the lowest outstanding debt per capita at \$853 and Tiffin has the highest per capita debt burden at \$5,982. Debt burden generally indicates the amount of capital investment a city is undertaking and its expectations for future growth. As Figure 14 shows the population growth rates for both Grimes and Tiffin have accelerated over the past few years. This has required considerable investment in new infrastructure.



City Budgets Revenue Sources Comparisons

Although property taxes are a major revenue source for all cities in the state, city budgets do depend on other revenue sources and the extent to which other revenue sources are available to cities impacts how much revenue must be obtained from property taxes. Figure 37 shows the amount of revenue each of the five comparison cities expects to obtain from each source for FY2020. Figure 38 shows the share of total projected revenues for FY2020 accounted for by each revenue source.

Table 37: Comparison Cities Revenue Budgets, FY2020

Revenue Sources	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Taxes Levies on Property	\$1,459,530	\$3,156,749	\$10,620,675	\$2,449,260	\$1,963,176
Less: Uncollected Property Taxes	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Delinquent Property Taxes	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TIF Revenues	\$921,961	\$602,808	\$2,158,592	\$336,600	\$1,119,451
Total Property Taxes	\$2,381,491	\$3,759,557	\$12,779,267	\$2,785,860	\$3,082,627
Other City Taxes	\$457,342	\$24,398	\$386,174	\$705,110	\$72,626
Licenses and Permits	\$37,250	\$329,500	\$748,900	\$207,125	\$401,230
Use of Money and Property	\$10,500	\$18,093	\$98,353	\$253,000	\$48,554
Intergovernmental	\$418,203	\$1,259,298	\$7,493,902	\$498,380	\$1,469,739
Charges for Fees & Service	\$516,400	\$2,882,000	\$7,510,600	\$2,592,350	\$2,141,500
Special Assessments	\$0	\$9,400	\$100,000	\$200	\$0
Miscellaneous	\$9,000	\$567,000	\$3,788,302	\$31,500	\$100,500
Other Financing Sources	\$0	\$6,601,000	\$15,813,000	\$0	\$7,421,700
Total Revenues	\$3,830,186	\$15,450,246	\$48,718,498	\$7,073,525	\$14,738,476

Table 38: Comparison Cities Revenue Budgets Shares, FY2020

Revenue Sources	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Taxes Levies on Property	38.1%	20.4%	21.8%	34.6%	13.3%
Less: Uncollected Property Taxes	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Delinquent Property Taxes	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
TIF Revenues	24.1%	3.9%	4.4%	4.8%	7.6%
Total Property Taxes	62.2%	24.3%	26.2%	39.4%	20.9%
Other City Taxes	11.9%	0.2%	0.8%	10.0%	0.5%
Licenses and Permits	1.0%	2.1%	1.5%	2.9%	2.7%
Use of Money and Property	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	3.6%	0.3%
Intergovernmental	10.9%	8.2%	15.4%	7.0%	10.0%
Charges for Fees & Service	13.5%	18.7%	15.4%	36.6%	14.5%
Special Assessments	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Miscellaneous	0.2%	3.7%	7.8%	0.4%	0.7%
Other Financing Sources	0.0%	42.7%	32.5%	0.0%	50.4%
Total Revenues	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

These two tables show that Robins has a larger share of revenue from property taxes than do the other four cities. Also, Robins derives a much larger share of its property tax revenue from TIF (Tax Increment Finance) districts than do the other cities. According to Linn County Assessor's records the city has seven TIF Districts and these districts incorporate 75.9% of the acreage associated with residential property and 99.5% of commercial acreage.

On the flip side, Robins shows zero revenue from Other Financing Sources, which primarily means from the issuance of debt. The same is true for Polk City, but Bondurant, Grimes, and Tiffin are issuing considerable amounts of new debt and as the following analysis of budgeted expenditures shows these three cities plan to make significant capital investments during FY2020.

Another revenue source for which Robins is on the low side compared to the other four cities is Charges for Fees and Services. The revenues Robins shows for this source come from water and sewer fees. Some of the other cities provide additional services for which they charge fees as well, such as garbage disposal and storm water utility.

Robins expects to derive 11.9% of FY2020 revenues from Other City Taxes, which means primarily local option sales tax (\$450,000). Without the local option tax revenue Robins would have to increase its property tax levy rate by \$2.02 per \$1,000 of taxable value to raise the same amount of revenue. This would increase its property tax levy rate to about \$9.73. Of the other four cities only Polk City has a local option sales tax and as a result it has the second lowest property tax levy among these comparison cities.

City Budgets Expenditures Comparisons

A review of the expenditures side of the FY2020 budgets for Robins and the other four cities provides a sense of the differences in priorities set by their citizens and policy-makers. Table 39 presents summaries of the cities' proposed expenditures by activity as submitted to the Iowa Department of Management (IowaDOM). Table 40 presents expenditure shares by activity for the five cities.

Table 39: Comparison Cities Expenditures Budgets, FY2020

Expenditure Categories	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Public Safety	\$379,081	\$1,837,662	\$5,176,882	\$1,964,409	\$550,902
Public Works	\$1,002,360	\$1,257,577	\$2,911,070	\$706,177	\$341,173
Health and Social Services	\$0	\$15,950	\$50,000	\$15,000	\$0
Culture and Recreation	\$605,010	\$648,116	\$2,173,177	\$598,018	\$335,364
Community and Economic Development	\$110,866	\$218,867	\$1,935,992	\$292,949	\$135,938
General Government	\$369,010	\$738,442	\$1,555,260	\$670,748	\$423,585
Debt Service	\$1,121,505	\$1,345,065	\$3,590,844	\$341,080	\$1,387,365
Capital Projects	\$716,136	\$6,094,792	\$31,335,000	\$1,259,793	\$9,120,000
Total Government Activities	\$4,303,968	\$12,156,471	\$48,728,225	\$5,848,174	\$12,294,327
Business Type/Enterprises	\$536,751	\$3,819,358	\$6,223,395	\$1,991,311	\$3,468,221
Total Expenditures	\$4,840,719	\$15,975,829	\$54,951,620	\$7,839,485	\$15,762,548

Table 40: Comparison Cities Expenditures Budgets Shares, FY2020

Expenditure Categories	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Public Safety	7.8%	11.5%	9.4%	25.1%	3.5%
Public Works	20.7%	7.9%	5.3%	9.0%	2.2%
Health and Social Services	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Culture and Recreation	12.5%	4.1%	4.0%	7.6%	2.1%
Community and Economic Development	2.3%	1.4%	3.5%	3.7%	0.9%
General Government	7.6%	4.6%	2.8%	8.6%	2.7%
Debt Service	23.2%	8.4%	6.5%	4.4%	8.8%
Capital Projects	14.8%	38.2%	57.0%	16.1%	57.9%
Total Government Activities	88.9%	76.1%	88.7%	74.6%	78.0%
Business Type/Enterprises	11.1%	23.9%	11.3%	25.4%	22.0%
Total Expenditures	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

For the operating budget categories, the highest shares of Robins' budget are designated for public works (20.7%) and culture and recreation (12.5%). The budget shares for both of these activity areas are noticeably higher than for the comparison cities. Also, Robins has a much higher share of its budget designated for debt service. On the other hand, Bondurant, Grimes, and Tiffin have much larger shares of their budgets than Robins designated for capital projects.

An additional way of comparing budgeted expenditures for the five cities is on a per capita basis. These population adjusted expenditure amounts by activity category are presented in Table 41. The most notable differences between Robins and the other cities are as follows:

- The \$109 per capita budgeted for public safety is less than half the amounts budgeted by Bondurant, Grimes, and Polk City, and \$41 per capita (27.7%) below the amount budgeted by Tiffin.
- The \$287 per capita budgeted for public works is \$72 per capita (33.7%) higher than the amount budgeted by the city with the next highest amount for this activity, which is Grimes.
- Robins has budgeted slightly more for culture and recreation than have the other cities. Its \$173 per capita is \$13 per capita (8.1%) above Grimes budgeted amount.
- Although in percentage terms Robins' budgeted amount for debt service (\$321 per capita) is much greater than for the other cities, adjusted for population size it is second to Tiffin's budgeted amount of \$378 per capita.
- Robins has budgeted only \$205 per capital for capital projects. In comparison, Tiffin has budgeted \$2,485 per capita and Grimes has budgeted \$2,310 per capita.

Table 41: Comparison Cities Expenditures Budgets per Capita, FY2020

Expenditure Categories	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Public Safety	\$109	\$277	\$382	\$408	\$150
Public Works	\$287	\$189	\$215	\$147	\$93
Health and Social Services	\$0	\$2	\$4	\$3	\$0
Culture and Recreation	\$173	\$98	\$160	\$124	\$91
Community and Economic Development	\$32	\$33	\$143	\$61	\$37
General Government	\$106	\$111	\$115	\$139	\$115
Debt Service	\$321	\$202	\$265	\$71	\$378
Capital Projects	\$205	\$917	\$2,310	\$262	\$2,485
Total Government Activities	\$1,233	\$1,829	\$3,593	\$1,216	\$3,350
Business Type/Enterprises	\$154	\$575	\$459	\$414	\$945
Total Expenditures	\$1,386	\$2,404	\$4,052	\$1,630	\$4,295

Since Robins and the other four cities included in this comparison are similar in terms of their stage of growth and expansion geographically, it is logical to expect that they face the same types of challenges relative to capital investment needs and demands for service expansion. To obtain information on how the other four cities are adjusting to growth each city administrator/manager was contacted to obtain information on staffing levels and capital investments.

Comparison Cities' Staffing

As a city grows a critical decision involves the determination of what services to offer and how to staff these service areas. Public safety – fire and police – is generally viewed by city residents as being among the most important services a city provides. The recent community survey reveals that the people of Robins consider public safety as their third most important priority among the eleven choices offered.

Two of the most important public safety staffing decisions cities must make as their populations grow are:

- When to begin the shift from all volunteer to professional firefighters, and
- Whether to have their own police department or contract out the service to the county or other jurisdiction.

Table 42 presents information on total and public safety staffing for Robins and the four comparison cities. The employee counts are not exactly equivalent because some cities contract with other jurisdictions for some services. Also, some of the cities employ part-time staff who likely do not all work the same number of hours. However, for the purposes of this analysis all part-time employees are assumed to work an average of 10 hours per week.

Table 42: Comparison Cities Staffing Levels

Number of Employees All Functions					
Staffing	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Full-time	3	25	55	21	11
Part-time	14	7	34	3	0
Volunteer	20	20	15	40	25
Total	37	52	104	64	36

Public Safety of Employees					
Staffing	Robins	Bondurant	Grimes	Polk City	Tiffin
Full-time Fire	0	6	13	1	0
Volunteer Fire	20	20	15	40	25
Total Fire	20	26	28	41	25
Full-time Police	0	0	0	7	0
Part-time Police	8	0	0	0	0
Contract with		Polk Co	Polk Co		Johnson Co
Total Police	8	0	0	7	0
Population	3,492	6,646	13,562	4,809	3,670
Full-Time/1,000 Residents	0.86	3.76	4.06	4.37	3.00
Part-time/1,000 Residents	4.01	1.05	2.51	0.62	0.00
FTE/1,000 Residents	1.86	4.02	4.68	4.52	3.00
Volunteer Fire/1,000 Residents	5.73	3.01	1.11	8.32	6.81

Robins employs the fewest full-time staff. The city's three full-time employees include the city clerk, public works foreman, and building official. The fourteen part-time employees include 9 police officers, four public works employees, and the fire chief. Also, there are 20 volunteer firefighters.

Among the four comparison cities, Grimes has the greatest number of employees. It has 55 full-time and 34 part-time employees, plus additional seasonal employees that are not counted in the above table. Also, in addition to 13 full-time firefighters, it has 15 volunteer firefighters and it shares its Fire Chief and Fire Marshall with the City of Johnston. Grimes contracts with Polk County for policing services.

The difference between employment levels for Robins and Grimes becomes more apparent when comparisons are made relative to their numbers of residents. Robins has 0.86 full-time and 4.01 part-time employees per 1,000 residents, while Grimes has 4.06 full-time and 2.51 part-time employees per 1,000 residents.

It is logical that the number of full-time employees will increase as population increases and that the increases will be more than proportional. Also, as population increases part-time positions will convert to full-time. These staffing changes happen because as the number of employees increases the city must add more managers, work tasks become more specialized, and amounts of work increase, particularly for staff engaged in public works, recreation, and administrative functions.

Looking at employment levels for Bondurant, Polk City, and Tiffin further confirms that the relative number of full-time employees increases and the relative number of part-time employees decreases as population grows. Tiffin has 11 full-time employees (3.00 per 1,000 residents). Polk City has 21 full-time employees (4.37 per 1,000 residents). And Bondurant has 25 full-time employees (3.76 per 1,000 residents). Polk City's number of full-time employees may seem somewhat high compared to the other cities, but it has its own police department while Tiffin, Bondurant, and Grimes contract for police services. The likely reason Polk City has its own police department is because of the two large recreational lakes – Saylorville Lake and Big Creek Lake – on its west and north sides.

Furthermore, beyond the influence of existing population levels on city staffing numbers, expectations for future population growth may influence employment levels as well. For example, Grimes' comprehensive plan projects its population will triple over the next 20 years. Bondurant, Polk City, and Tiffin also all expect significant population growth over the next 20 years.

Comparison Cities' Capital Investment

Growing communities often must play both catchup and the long game. They must address existing infrastructure deficiencies and accommodate anticipated future growth simultaneously. This section of the report discusses the types of capital investment Robins and the four comparison cities have undertaken the past several years and new investment they plan to make over the next few years.

Robins

In recent years the City of Robins has focused capital investment on five types of projects.

- It has constructed booster stations and extended water lines to the west side of the city and to areas along North Center Point Road and County Home Road.
- It has built five sewer lift stations.

- Sewer and water were extended to the D & M Addition (sewer), Chester Road/Court, North Center Point Road to County Home Road, and from the center of town to North Center Point Road.
- Six roads were reconstructed to urban cross sections.
- The new East Knoll Park was built and improvements were made to South Troy Park.

Bondurant

The City of Bondurant has made \$10 million in capital investments over the past three years and plans to increase investment up to around \$30 million over the next three years. Examples of types of investments planned are provided in the city's FY 2019-2020 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

- About \$3.6 million is planned for trail system improvements.
- Land purchases are planned for a future sports complex and new park, and for playground equipment purchases for existing parks.
- About \$330,000 for public works equipment purchases.
- About \$700,000 for street projects.
- \$3.65 million for storm water system improvements.
- \$3.77 million for waste water system improvements on top of \$3.84 million spent the past three years.
- About \$900,000 for water system improvements.
- About \$2.3 million for fire equipment.

Bondurant completed a comprehensive plan in 2012, which contains 2030 population projections ranging between 7,300 and 10,000. With a current population of 6,646 these projection likely are low. In addition, in 2015 Bondurant completed a Community Visioning Report and Feasibility Study.

A recently announced distribution center that will employ over 1,000 workers will likely result in significant population growth and accelerate the need for additional infrastructure investments.

Grimes

As one of the fastest growing of the Des Moines Metropolitan Area suburbs Grimes 2018 Comprehensive Plan identifies an extensive list of future investment needs. Also, recent major investments were identified by contacting the City Administrator.

Over the past three years major investment projects undertaken by the city include:

- ASR (aquifer storage and recovery) for the water system.
- New 16 inch water main connection.
- Roadway connection on S. James and SE 37th Street and SE 37th Street and Hwy 141 improvements.
- Two road overlay projects.
- Park updates and creation, and trail connector.

Looking toward the next three years, major capital investments planned for Grimes include:

- A new library.
- WRA (Wastewater Reclamation Authority) connector.
- Complete new water tower, new well, and new water treatment plant.
- Road project on SW County Line Road and new road in NE Gateway for commercial development area.
- Possible new fire station.
- More trail connections and new parks.

Grimes completed a comprehensive plan in 2010 and a plan update in 2018. Projections to 2040 anticipate more than a tripling of the city's population to 44,679 from its 2018 estimated population of 13,562.

Polk City

Polk City is a combination of old and new. In 1950 its population totaled only 336. Its current population totals 4,809. The completion of Saylorville Lake by the U.S. Corp of Engineers in September 1977 marks the chronological dividing line between the old and the new. In 1970 the city's population equaled 715, but over the next decade its population jumped to 1,658. In terms of commercial development the city also has the old (the town square) and new (S. 3rd Street and W. Bridge Road and Tournament Club of Iowa).

Over the past three years major capital investments made by the city include:

- Remodeling of the police department building.
- Street projects.
- Purchase of additional water capacity.

Looking into the future, capital investments planned for the next three years include:

- Possible new water tower.
- Possible City Hall renovation.
- Additional street projects.

In 2014 Polk City completed a comprehensive plan that presents a vision for the city's future and recommendations for the plans implementation. Looking out 20 years to 2035 the plan provides a range of population projections that are between 6,234 and 9,909.

Tiffin

Tiffin has over tripled its population since 2000, increasing from 1,049 to 3,670 in 2018. The city is located just northwest of the I-80/I-380 interchange and along U.S. Hwy 6. In addition, to good transportation access, its proximity to Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty has stimulated its recent growth. Another important draw for the city is the locations of elementary, middle, and high schools within the city.

Major capital investments made by the city over the past three years include:

- A new wastewater treatment plant.
- New traffic signals.
- Four street construction projects, one of which is a roundabout.
- Park improvements.

Looking forward, Tiffin anticipates making the following capital investments over the next three years:

- Additional street construction projects.
- A recreation center.
- Two trail projects.

In 2018 ECICOG (East Central Iowa Council of Governments) helped the City of Tiffin prepare a comprehensive plan. That plan projects the city's population will grow to 4,867 by 2020 and then jump to 12,168 by 2030.

Major Challenges Facing Comparison Cities

The City Administrator/Manager for each of the four comparison cities was asked to identify the major challenges being faced by their cities.

- Bondurant: “More growth – retaining our personality and identity amidst overwhelming growth.”
- Grimes: “Just keeping up with the infrastructure demands in a growing community. We are looking at \$60MM in water and waste water improvements over the next 3 years. That doesn’t include the facility needs to support a growing staff and seriously needed street work.”
- Polk City: “Population growth and outgrowing current city facilities.”
- Tiffin: “Infrastructure improvements, improved traffic flow through town, hiring additional personnel and dealing with the complications and inconveniences of the I-80/I-380 interchange project.”

Conclusions

Certainly every city is unique in various ways and thus faces some challenges that other cities may not face. For example, the two recreational lakes and tournament golf course likely draw many more outsiders to Polk City, particularly on weekends and holidays, than is the case for other cities. On the other hand, there are also a number of common challenges faced by all of the cities. These include:

- Providing improvements to existing roads, such as widening, resurfacing, adding turn lanes and signals.
- Constructing new roads of various capacities and functional categories.
- Extending and adding capacity to water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure.
- Purchasing new public safety equipment and either renovating old or constructing new public safety facilities.
- Developing new parks, trails, and other recreational facilities.
- Expanding public works, building code, and planning departments and adding administrative office space.

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