

# 06

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

The economic environment covers the economy, jobs, businesses, income and poverty, and afford-ability. This section includes economic development and competitiveness, and guidance for the City of Elkhart. A livable community creates the type of place people want to live, work, invest, and build. Elkhart has a firm foundation for this already, with opportunities to further improve through redevelopment and renewal.

To create a thriving City there must be a sense of community, and a viable economy that supports the community. The best practices outlined in this chapter are aimed to help grow the population and economic base of Elkhart. This section of the report also examines local retail sales and economic trends within Polk County. Population change is a key factor that influences local retail sales performance. Population trends can reflect the general economic climate of a region, and population growth similar to what Elkhart has experienced can suggest a more favorable retail environment.

The following pages evaluate and synthesize key economic information gathered in the 2017 Retail Trade Analysis Report (Iowa State University Extension) to determine the best approaches to economic development for Elkhart.



# Economic Development Goals, Objectives & Strategies

A focus on creating a livable, walkable, amenity-rich place is a key economic development strategy for the city to attract and retain employees. To establish and maintain a healthy and vibrant economy, the following goals have been developed:

-  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1: Encourage the development of commercial and industrial uses that can increase the tax base while providing other secondary benefits to the community while considering cost of services, improvements and overall community needs.
-  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2: Maximize the impact of the proposed NE Beltway to the benefit of the community. Consider planning studies that can provide appropriate levels of service to attract commerce and industry.
-  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3: Encourage the operation of convenience service businesses to serve the immediate needs of residents.
-  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4: Identify unique commercial opportunities to expand the economic drive of Elkhart.
-  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5: Promote economic equity in Elkhart to benefit residents regardless of identity or background.



# Economic Development

## KEY RETAIL INDICATORS FOR POLK COUNTY

POLK	FY 2016	FY 2017	% CHANGE
Real total taxable sales (\$)	8,201,430,172	8,312,033,937	1.3% ▲
Number of reporting firms (Annualized)	10,651	10,812	1.5% ▲
Population	471,010	478,299	1.5% ▲
Average sales per capita (\$)	17,412	17,378	-0.2% ►
Average Sales per Firm (\$)	769,997	768,761	-0.2% ►

## POLK COUNTY TAXABLE RETAIL SALES IN FY 2017

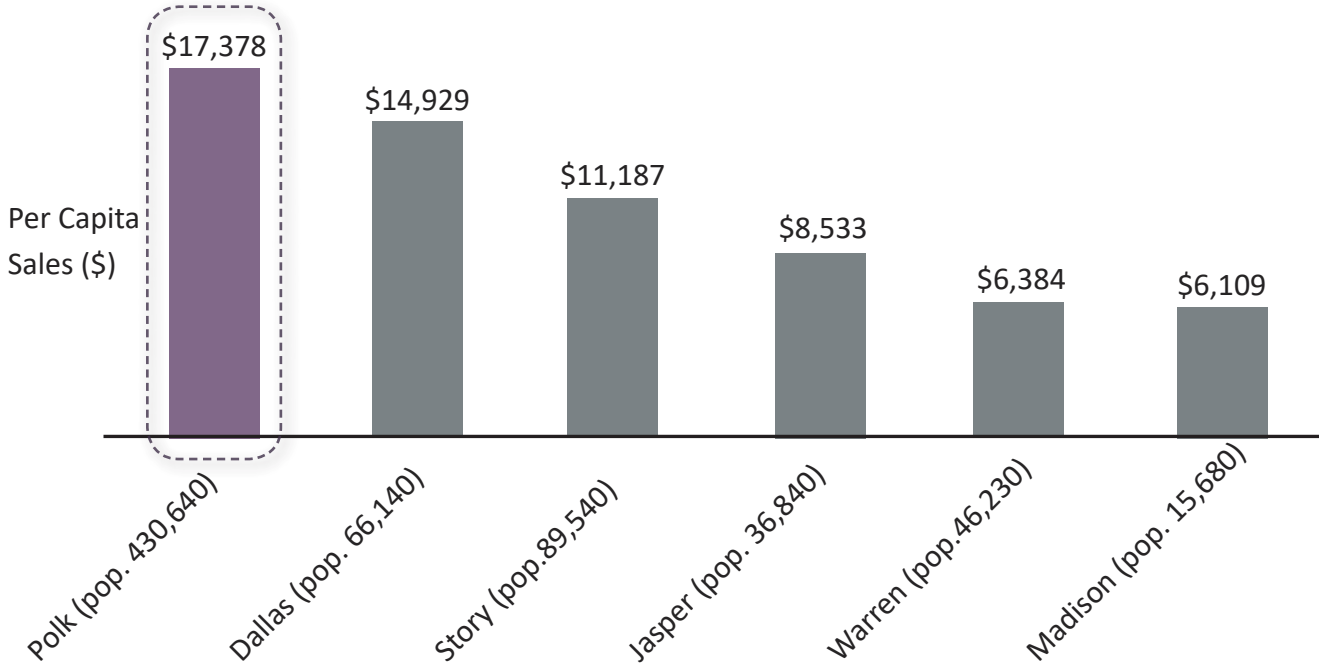
AREA NAME	POPULATION	AVERAGE # FILERS	SALES \$ MILLIONS
Polk Total	478,299	10,812	8,312
Alleman	461	12	1.2
Altoona	17,898	379	576.7
Ankeny	58,217	1,228	977.8
Bondurant	5,704	109	19.4
Carlisle*	4,311	135	25.4
Clive*	17,915	535	502.3
Des Moines	219,459	4,915	3,851
Elkhart	778	29	5.5
Grimes	11,629	269	266.0
Johnston	20,287	400	151.4
Mitchellville	2,462	44	6.9
Pleasant Hill	9,738	188	71.6
Polk City	4,548	108	19.5
Runnells	534	65	7.6
Urbandale*	43,286	1,057	790.7
West Des Moines*	65,564	1,747	1,796.7
Windsor Heights	5,095	124	40.0
Other areas in Polk County		63	29.3
*Neighboring county portions		(593)	(827.6)

Source: Polk County Assessor's Office



# Economic Development

## NEIGHBORING COUNTY COMPARISON OF PER CAPITA RETAIL SALES



### POLK COUNTY TAXABLE RETAIL SALES SUMMARY

TYPE OF FIRM	TOTAL SALES (\$)	REPORTING FIRMS	POLK COUNTY	STATE OF IOWA
Apparel Stores	212,017,864	266	798,561	660,275
Building Materials Stores	616,261,678	148	4,156,908	2,010,762
Eating and Drinking Establishments	980,193,826	1292	758,811	560,719
Food Stores (Excluding non-taxable food)	600,138,164	383	1,565,918	1,116,757
General Merchandise Stores	776,082,357	86	9,050,523	6,099,265
Home Furnishings Stores	362,163,252	198	1,826,801	854,259
Specialty Retail Stores	683,142,362	1804	378,630	218,297
Service Establishments	1,361,687,244	4316	315,516	169,522
Miscellaneous Retail Firms	614,690,477	1327	463,131	250,669
Automotive and Related Stores	371,492,134	236	1,574,119	824,332
Utilities and Transportation Services	692,785,734	293	2,368,498	1,206,482
Retail Sales by Wholesale Firms	1,041,378,863	464	2,245,561	907,719



# Economic Development

A livable community creates the type of place people want to live, work, invest, and build. Elkhart has a firm foundation for this already, with opportunities to further improve through redevelopment. Recently, the toolkit of economic development strategies has been expanded, moving beyond traditional business subsidies to include creating unique and livable place that attract businesses, people, jobs, and investment.

Helping businesses in Elkhart grow and flourish is a key objective of this plan. This will help foster the city's economic base and improve the quality of life for Elkhart's citizens as well as the business community. Steps to achieve this include:

- Make strategic investments in physical and technological infrastructure, public facilities, and public spaces to support community livability.
- Identify and implement long term redevelopment projects that can catalyze revitalization and investment, particularly around strategic locations in the city.
- Periodically survey businesses and residents to provide feedback on progress and to suggest changes to economic development approach.
- Identify local entrepreneurs and their business needs.

The close proximity of Elkhart to a reliable transportation network and two employment centers makes it an attractive location for residential growth. This geography is a significant factor in previous residential construction success and the continued residential growth potential. This geographic advantage for housing development can act as a negative factor for commercial growth.

Certain types of non-residential uses rely on relative population numbers, household income demographics, vehicle trips per day and available workforce. The competition to attract new commercial services between Elkhart and other established retail and/or employment centers will be challenging. The City must develop a strategy and approach for attracting non-residential uses that: provide services to residents, create quality jobs, and make significant site investments.