



# sheffield, iowa

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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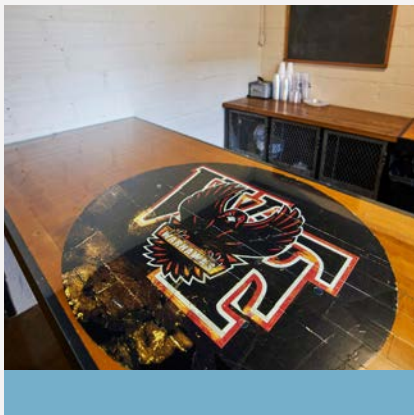
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OVERVIEW



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# overview

In October 2020 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) launched the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC) to provide technical assistance and planning support to foster placemaking and spur economic development in rural communities. USDA RD selected five technical assistance providers from across the country to assist identified communities with preserving cultural and historic structures, enhancing capacity for broadband access, and supporting the development of transportation, housing and recreational spaces, among other things.

In collaboration with USDA RD, [Atlas Community Studios](#) and [McClure](#) partnered to launch the [Midwest Placemaking Innovation Accelerator](#) to develop placemaking action plans and provide implementation technical assistance to three rural communities, including: [Allen County, Kansas](#), [Atchison, Kansas](#), and [Sheffield, Iowa](#).

**The project team is implementing the strategic process in four phases between January 2021 - September 2022:**

## 01.

**Visioning & Public Input:** Host visioning sessions for the steering committee and public, facilitate focus groups and one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, and solicit feedback via online survey(s).

## 02.

**Community Assessment:** Compile and analyze quantitative and qualitative data, determine emerging themes, identify potential project concepts, and assess the viability of priority projects/initiatives.

## 03.

**Placemaking Action Plan:** Define priority projects/initiatives, identify key partners, determine programming, estimate capital and short-term operating costs, and curate a list of public and private funding sources to consider for implementation.

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## 04.

### **Implementation Technical Assistance:**

Prioritize projects/initiatives, identify fundraising coordinator(s), build cross-sector partnerships, identify implementation committee members, determine viable funding opportunities to implement priority projects/initiatives, and establish a timeline to execute.

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The overall goals of the placemaking process are economic and social development, increased population and tourism, and improvement to quality of life standards.

Sheffield's placemaking action plan focuses on three key priorities:

- Housing
- Key Building Revitalization ("The Grand Theater")
- Childcare

The final deliverable for Sheffield is a designed PDF including all information gathered, the full action plan with next steps for implementation, and appendices with additional resources for each priority area. Additionally, Sheffield will receive an abbreviated version of the PDF in the form of a custom website with a unique domain to highlight significant components of the placemaking action plan for consumption by the broader public.

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# about atlas community studios

Atlas Community Studios was founded by a small, diverse group of creative problem-solvers and entrepreneurs looking for the opportunity to advance the economic prosperity of small and rural communities across the country. With decades of combined experience spanning both the public and private sectors, the Atlas team specializes in strategic planning, economic development, and creative placemaking. Atlas helps communities plan for development and growth through collaborative strategic planning and simple-to-execute, realistic strategies. The Atlas team's portfolio of work includes more than 47 action-oriented plans in rural communities across 19 states and one Canadian province, including a town as small as 80 people and a state with nearly 3 million residents.



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# about mcclure

McClure is a civil engineering company with the mission to make lives better. And we achieve this by thinking like owners. We do whatever it takes to get your job from concept to completion. We help clients navigate opportunities like funding and building public support for a project. Always adding value and imagining what's possible. Our engineering and planning expertise includes transportation, aviation, structures, water, wastewater, stormwater management, land development, landscape architecture, construction observation, administration, surveying, and community development. Since 1956, McClure has grown to a firm of nearly 200 professionals in ten offices located in Ankeny, Carroll, Clive (headquarters), North Liberty, Fort Dodge, Carroll, and Sioux City, Iowa; North Kansas City, Macon, and Columbia, Missouri; and Lenexa, Kansas. McClure has 60 Registered Professional Engineers, 12 Registered Land Surveyors, one Registered Landscape Architect, four LEED Accredited Professionals, one Certified Envision Sustainability Professional, and one AICP Certified Planner.

# INTRODUCTION



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# introduction

The Sheffield Placemaking Action Plan process includes a holistic analysis of key trends, opportunities, and challenges the community faces to achieve a prosperous economic and social future. Quantitative research is combined with comprehensive stakeholder outreach to ensure that Sheffield's strategic priorities reflect the community's vision and goals.

# planning & technical assistance process

## **CORE GROUP & STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Sheffield assembled a project steering committee comprised of 22 individuals with backgrounds ranging from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The steering committee is led by a core group of six committee members, who meet more frequently to discuss assessment findings and strategic priorities. The core group convened in January 2021 to kickoff the planning process.
- The steering committee is convened quarterly for meetings to assist with oversight of the placemaking process and to ensure the development of the action plan is community-centered and in alignment with local priorities.
- The Atlas/McClure team convened the steering committee for its first official meeting in April 2021 to provide an overview of the RPIC initiative and the scope of work for the placemaking process before facilitating a visioning session to solicit input about the region's assets, challenges, and opportunities related to housing and economic development.
- During the Atlas/McClure team's first site visit in July 2021, the core group met in person to discuss project updates and next steps including visioning, the public input survey, and focus groups.

## **PUBLIC INPUT & FOCUS GROUPS**

- A Public Survey was launched and promoted to residents in July, 2021 and was open through September, 2021. It closed with 151 responses.
- In February, 2022 a Focus Group was held at City Hall to review the proposed Grand Theater renovation concepts.

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**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

- The community assessment report features high-level quantitative trends for Sheffield compared to three peer communities (Central City, Fredericksburg, and St. Ansgar), the state of Iowa, and the United States.
- The report also incorporates key themes from the stakeholder input conducted to date to determine assets and challenges related to housing, childcare, and quality of life amenities.
- In addition to the quantitative data and stakeholder input analysis, the Atlas/McClure team conducted topical research to contextualize the key trends and issues affecting Sheffield, which ultimately informed the strategic opportunities and priority project concepts in the placemaking action plan.

**PLACEMAKING ACTION PLAN**

- Based on the community assessment report, the placemaking action plan presents a new vision statement to guide Sheffield’s future economic trajectory and strategic priorities.
- The placemaking action plan also makes strategic recommendations for priority projects and provides a resource roadmap to help advance them from ideation to reality.



## existing reports & studies

The following reports and studies helped inform the findings of the Community Assessment and will be considered for incorporation into the placemaking action plan as necessary:

- Franklin County Comprehensive Development Plan (2010)
- Franklin County Comprehensive Housing Study Findings (2017)
- Childcare Needs in Sheffield (2019)
- FY 2020 City of Sheffield Budget

### **DATA SOURCES**

The community assessment report utilizes a variety of data indicators to examine Sheffield's competitiveness as a place to live, work, and do business. The Atlas/McClure team sourced data primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau and other public sources including the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Additionally, some local labor force data was provided by Sukup Manufacturing. The Franklin County GIS Department provided the team with GIS datasets via the assessor to support the infill lot analysis.



## **CENSUS ESTIMATES**

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey that collects and produces information on social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics for communities throughout the United States. While the survey is annual, data indicators for communities with fewer than 65,000 residents are typically provided as five-year averages in order to increase statistical reliability and reduce margins of error. The tradeoff is that ACS 5-Year Estimates are less current. For instance, 5-Year Estimates from the 2020 ACS are derived from 60 months of data collected between 2016 and 2020. Because Sheffield has a population of fewer than 65,000 residents, this assessment exclusively uses 5-Year Estimates for ACS data indicators.

## **COMPARISON GEOGRAPHIES**

Sheffield, Iowa is the primary geographic unit of analysis in this report. However, to provide additional context, data indicators for Sheffield are benchmarked against the United States, the State of Iowa, and three comparison cities: Central City, Fredericksburg, and St. Ansgar, Iowa. Comparison areas were chosen by the Atlas/McClure team, and are intended to provide context and perspective on Sheffield trends but will not influence the determination of strategic priorities or project/initiative concepts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





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# executive summary

The Sheffield Placemaking Action Plan process includes an analysis of key trends, opportunities, and challenges the city faces to achieve a prosperous economic and social future. Quantitative research combines with comprehensive stakeholder outreach to ensure that Sheffield's strategic priorities reflect the community's vision.

## KEY TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

The following key trends and challenges emerged from the quantitative and qualitative research conducted for this Community Assessment.

- 01.** The cost to build new housing continues to outpace the wages for a majority of residents

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- 02.** Recreational opportunities are available, but cultural amenities and social experiences are limited for residents and visitors.

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- 03.** Economic development has been stymied by the lack of access to childcare in Sheffield.

### FUTURE VISION

The purpose of Sheffield's vision statement is to inform and shape future investment, policies, programs, and planning efforts to ensure the will of its residents is represented in the decision-making process. Based on the responses received during the stakeholder input phase, the Atlas/MEC team suggests Sheffield consider the following vision statement:

***Sheffield is a community of choice with opportunity for all ages and stages to connect, grow, and thrive.***



## **STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS**

Several potential strategic opportunity areas emerged from quantitative research and stakeholder feedback. Underlying these opportunity areas and potential projects/initiatives should be a commitment to a progressive, innovative, and sustainable future Sheffield residents desire.

Strategic opportunities include:

- ✓ Focus on the local workforce as the target audience to support new housing development
- ✓ Transform The Grand Theater into an anchor cultural institution
- ✓ Leverage regional assets and financial resources to expand access to childcare

## **SWOT ANALYSIS**

To gain a better understanding of the key trends and challenges in Sheffield, the Atlas/MEC team facilitated a variety of stakeholder input methods to generate a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis for the community.

### **STRENGTHS**

- Great place to raise a family
- Friendly, welcoming community
- Sukup Manufacturing
- Active and growing Downtown
- Great schools, Wellness Center
- Golf Course
- Strong sense of community
- Swimming Pool
- Strong local school and wellness center
- Local restaurants
- Location - proximity to Mason City/ Clear Lake as well as within two hours of major metro areas/airports
- Local medical dental and pharmacy access
- Existing childcare facility
- Community events
- Parks
- Walking/biking path

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## **WEAKNESSES**

- Housing: lack of variety in styles and price point; no land available
- Childcare - lack of options/availability
- Limited social gatherings spaces
- Few youth opportunities outside of sports

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Revitalize old theater building
- Expanded child care options
- Infill housing developments
- Homeownership counseling and educational opportunities
- Attainable workforce housing
- Major employers with inflow of employees to convert to homebuyers
- Old Marty's building land
- Splash pad
- Lot owned by the city could be developed into single family homes
- Teen Center
- Expanded campground/visitor hours

## **THREATS**

- Location - Proximity to Mason City and Clear lake - (both a positive and a challenge)



KEY TRENDS & CHALLENGES



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# key trends & challenges

The following key trends and challenges emerged from the quantitative and qualitative research conducted for this Community Assessment.

# 01. THE COST TO BUILD NEW HOUSING CONTINUES TO OUTPACE THE WAGES FOR A MAJORITY OF RESIDENTS

There are a number of factors that go into selecting where to live including access to employment, great schools, and proximity to family and friends. One of the largest pull factors for Sheffield is centered on the local employment opportunities both in town and in nearby communities, such as Mason City, Charles City, and Clear Lake. This section will highlight some of the challenges and opportunities to support further housing development in Sheffield.

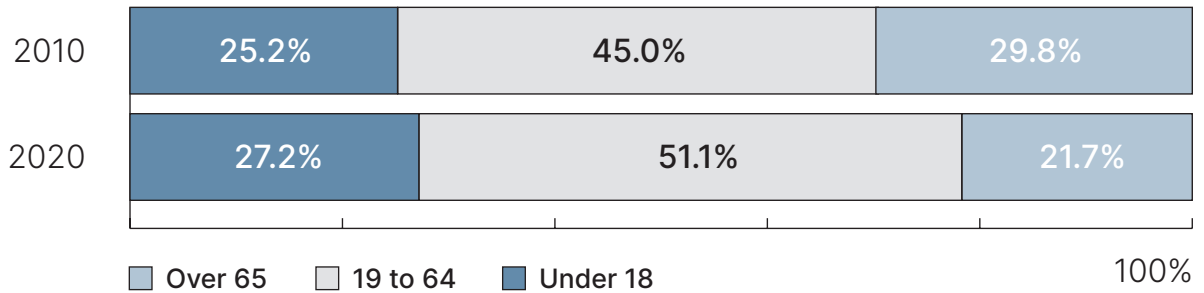
## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

A community's demographics can help us better understand the current housing situation. Key data points for Sheffield include:

- **Population Trend:** Overall, the population has been pretty stagnant with ups and downs over the last 30 years. For instance, there was a sharp decline between 1990 and 2000 of 244 residents, or 20.8%. This population was rebounded in 2010 and then experienced a slight decline in the 2020 US Census counts.
- **Average Household Size:** These rates increased from 2.4 persons to 2.6 persons per household between 2010 and 2020 indicating more families and/or fewer single-occupancy households.
- **Median Age:** The median age of residents went from 41.8 years old in 2010 down to 39.8 years old in 2020 indicating a slight increase of younger population, primarily in the Workforce Cohort – residents aged 19 to 64 years old.



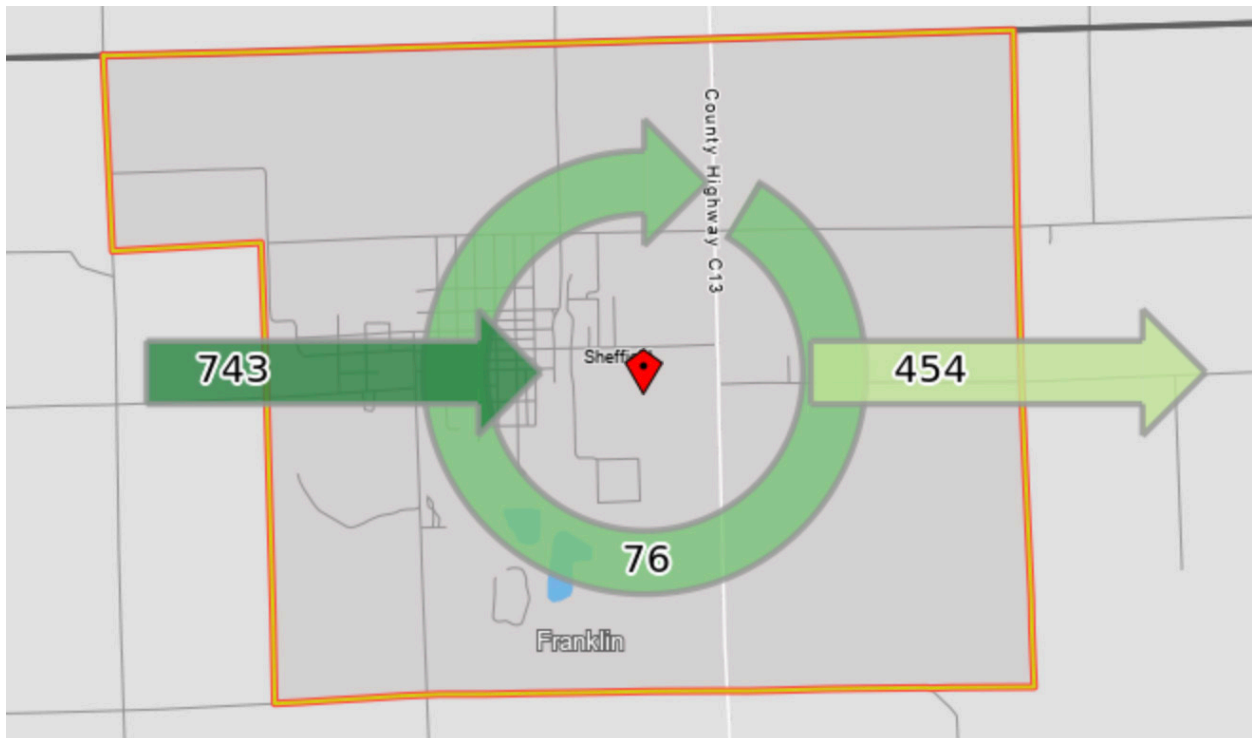
**FIGURE 1 | POPULATION BY AGE COHORT**



Source: US Census 5-year

- **Employment by Industry:** Of the 819 jobs in Sheffield, 743 workers come from outside Sheffield. A total of 546 workers, or 66.7%, are in the Manufacturing sector followed by Health Care and Social Assistance with 81 jobs and Education Services with 42 jobs.

**FIGURE 2 | INFLOW/OUTFLOW COMMUTING PATTERN**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics via OnTheMap (2019)

- **Resident Workforce:** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 76 workers or 9.3% of the total workforce in Sheffield is served by residents. A total of 144 workers, or 17.6%, live in Hampton, with an additional 70 workers, or 8.5% commuting in from Mason City.

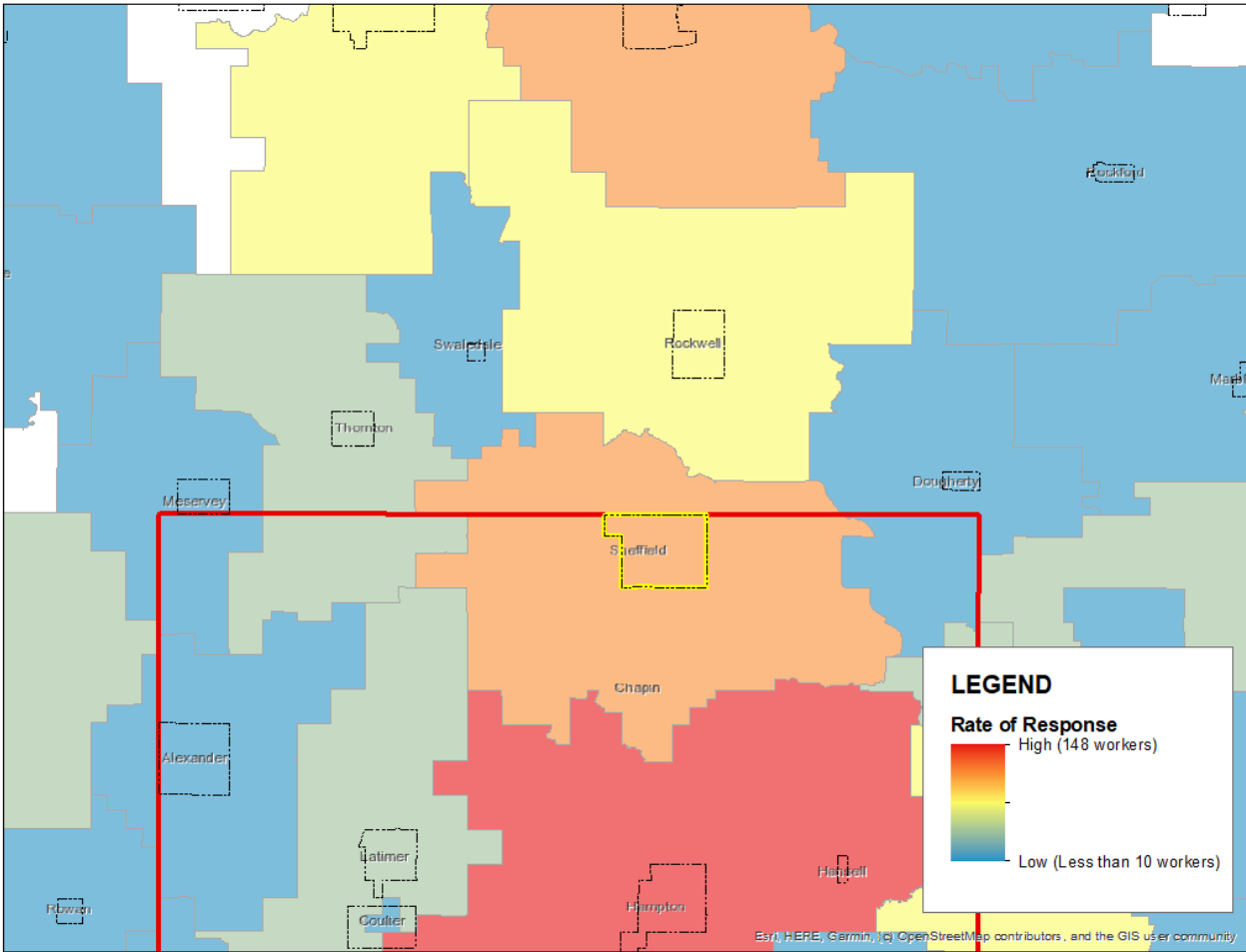
**TABLE 1 | TOP HOME DESTINATIONS FOR WORKERS IN SHEFFIELD**

PLACE	COUNT	SHARE
Hampton	144	17.6%
Sheffield	76	9.3%
Mason	70	8.5%
Rockwell	28	3.4%
Clear Lake	20	2.4%
Iowa Falls	17	2.1%
Ackley	14	1.7%
Dumont	10	1.2%
Allison	9	1.1%
Geneva	8	1.0%
All other locations	423	51.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics via OnTheMap (2019)

- Sukup Employee Home Destination:** The data provided by Sukup Manufacturing aligns with the Census data showing a majority of their employees are commuting from Hampton (146 or 20.8%) and Mason City (80 or 11.4%) with 113 workers, or 16.1%, residing within Sheffield, zip code 50475.

**FIGURE 3 | SUKUP MANUFACTURING – EMPLOYEE HOME DESTINATION**



Source: Sukup Manufacturing (September 2021)

- **Median Household Income:** At \$53,169, the MHI of Sheffield residents is 14% lower than the statewide figure of \$61,836.
- **Poverty:** A total of 9.8% of Sheffield residents experience poverty, on par with the statewide figure of 10.8%.
- **Housing Tenure:** Nearly 81% of households are owner-occupied, much higher than the statewide figure of 71.2%.

**Owner Occupied Housing Units**

**80.7%**

Sheffield, Iowa

**Renter Occupied Housing Units**

**19.3%**

Sheffield, Iowa

**70.5%**

Franklin County, Iowa

**29.5%**

Franklin County, Iowa

**71.2%**

Iowa

**28.8%**

Iowa

- **Median Home Value:** The overall home value is much lower at \$100,600 in Sheffield versus \$163,900 at the state level, a common factor in rural communities with a lower share of new homes.
- **Excessive Housing Cost:** This term refers to a household spending more than 30% of income on housing costs. Both owner- and renter-occupied housing is on par with the state levels.
- **Vacancy Rates:** Both owner- and renter-occupied housing units have an effective vacancy rate of 0% indicating a high need for new housing options.

**[CHECK OUT MORE DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS ON THE ONLINE DASHBOARD >](#)**

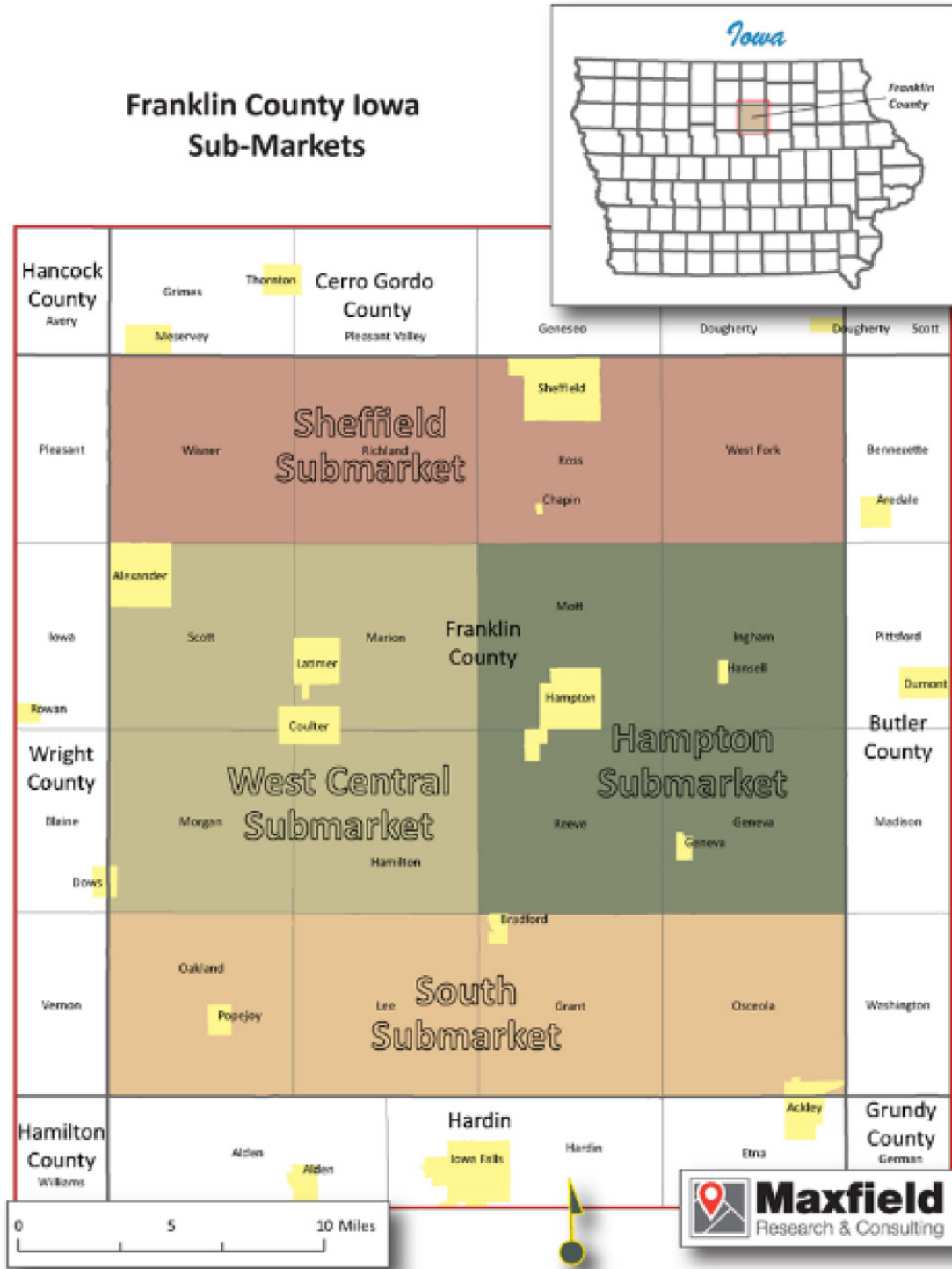


## **PAST STUDIES**

The most recent housing related study completed on behalf of Sheffield was done for the entire Franklin County market. The county-wide study included submarket analyses for the Sheffield area covering the northern tier of the county. Some key data points to consider include:

- The study identified a countywide demand of 600+ new housing units over a ten-year period (2016-2025). Of that total, nearly 66% or 390+ units are targeted at seniors.
- A total of 96 housing units or nearly 15% of the county's overall demand is attributed to the Sheffield Submarket with 96 senior units, 20 for-sale products, and 14 rental units.
- Demand is across various price points, but entry-level single-family units are in highest demand and the most difficult to produce any return on investment without local support.
- In 2016, there were 47 vacant lots within seven active subdivisions. The Quarry Ridge development at Stone Ridge Golf Course accounted for 31 of these lots. Today, there are 26 lots still available.
- These developments are targeted as "Trade-Up Homes" priced at \$275,000 and up.

**FIGURE 4 | 2017 FRANKLIN COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING STUDY - SUBMARKET MAP**





**DANIELLE YOUNGBLUT**

EXTERNAL & SPECIAL EVENTS COMMUNICATIONS  
COORDINATOR

**“I ACCEPTED THE JOB NOT KNOWING  
THERE WASN’T HOUSING”.**

After accepting a full time position with Sukup Manufacturing Danielle couldn’t find quality and affordable rental housing with amenities in Sheffield. She ended up commuting an hour and forty minutes daily for two months while she looked for closer options. After word of mouth through coworkers she secured an apartment with roommates.

## **HOUSING CHALLENGES**

The demographic trends data showed that there is virtually no available housing in Sheffield. As a result, hundreds of workers commute into town daily to work at Sukup Manufacturing, Deerfield Place Assisted Living and Care Center, West Fork Schools, and other local employers. The challenges highlighted here are not intended to be all-encompassing but to help inform the public of the general issues impacting housing throughout the community. Addressing these issues head-on will make the most impact in creating new opportunities for housing in Sheffield.

### **Barriers to developers/investors**

A common issue for many rural communities is the cost gap: the cost to build new housing does not equal the return on investment to sell or rent a property. As a result, most new housing units are custom-built homes on greenfield sites located on the outer edges of a community as opposed to reinvesting on infill lots where existing infrastructure is readily available.

Consider a hypothetical example to understand why it is challenging to build a new home in an existing residential neighborhood. A builder constructs a new three-bedroom, two-bathroom single-family at the cost of \$200,000 but must price the new home for \$238,000 to cover their realtor fees and closing costs and earn an acceptable profit. Unfortunately, there are few comparable properties in Sheffield, which lowers the appraisal value and only allows a borrower to finance \$218,000. The borrower must make up the difference – \$20,000 – with cash to get financed. These appraisal challenges create a disincentive for any speculative investment in neighborhoods with poor existing housing stock without substantial subsidies.

### **Buyers' financing challenges**

Stakeholder feedback and statistical analysis have identified challenges impacting many potential homebuyers. Whether it is insufficient resources to afford a down payment, difficulty qualifying for traditional housing loans, or becoming cost-burdened by mortgage payments requiring more than 30 percent of their monthly income, these issues create challenges in Sheffield's ability to transition residents from rental units to owner-occupied housing. The general rule of thumb for determining how much home financing a person

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can afford is to multiply the household income by two to two-and-a-half times. Using Sheffield's median household income of \$53,169, the typical household can afford a mortgage up to \$159,507. Using the previous example of a new home priced at \$238,000, the potential buyer would need to have a household income of at least \$95,200.

### **Availability of affordable lots**

The previous discussion highlighted the high cost of entry into owning a newly constructed home. An additional challenge facing Sheffield is the availability of affordable housing lots. A majority of the current shovel-read housing lots are located on the Ridge Stone Golf Course, totaling 26 available lots. These lots are a quarter acre in size and up, however, a few of the lots have been subdivided into townhome condos. The current price for these lots starts at \$25,000 with larger cul-de-sac lots available at \$35,000. These lots would be considered affordable relative to opportunities in Mason City or Clear Lake, however, few speculative homes are being built on the golf course as the final product is priced beyond what many can afford in Sheffield.

Infill lots are another alternative to consider for locating new housing units. The city and its partners should consider further incentives to encourage and support this type of redevelopment, as it can result in many benefits to the community<sup>1</sup>:

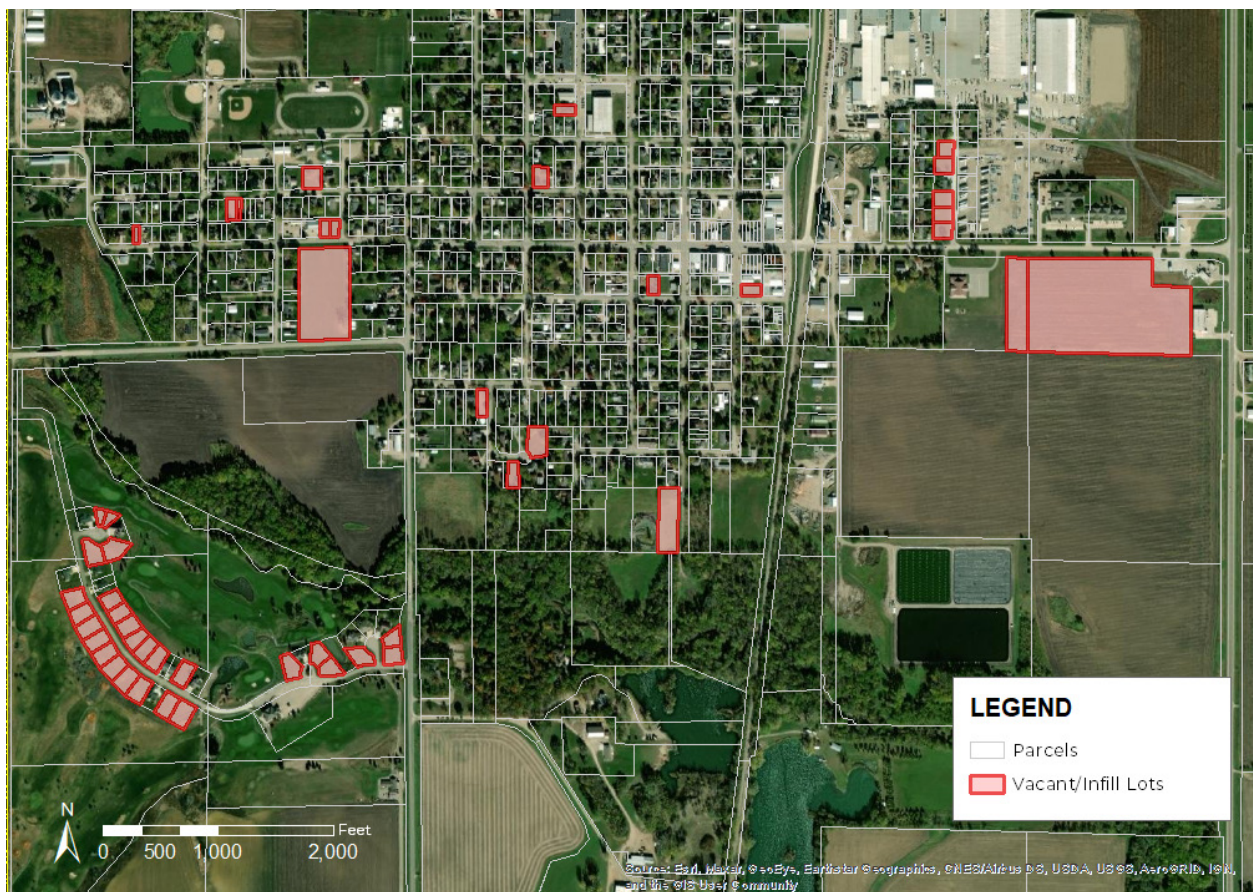
- Municipalities can save money by promoting development in areas that already have infrastructure connected to public services instead of financing new infrastructure for greenfield development.
- Infill development can raise property values of adjacent properties.
- It can bring residences and destinations closer together for a more walkable community.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a mapping tool that was utilized to highlight the available infill lots in Sheffield. Franklin County Assessor's office provided the base parcel data to first identify the current land use pattern of the community with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses. While all land use types were considered when selecting infill lots, areas classified as residential were considered most applicable since these lots were typically located adjacent to other residential properties.

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Properties with an assessed value of less than \$20,000 were first selected for further analysis. A total of 248 parcels fit this criteria, accounting for nearly 393 acres – or nearly 6% - of Sheffield’s total area within its corporate limits. Unusable parcels such as right of way alleys and lots less than 50 feet wide were unselected. Then further review was conducted utilizing aerial imagery and the Franklin County Assessor’s website. Properties with the presence of existing outbuildings or non-primary residences were removed as non-viable for redevelopment. Some vacant lots owned by the neighboring property owner were also removed from the list of available infill lot. Once the analysis was complete, only 49 parcels remaining accounting for nearly 35 acres of usable lots.

**FIGURE 5 | INFILL LOTS – POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES**



<sup>1</sup>Office of Sustainable Communities and Smart Growth Program, “Attracting Infill Development in Distressed Communities: 30 Strategies. PDF, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 5 May 2015. <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth>



### **JAMES PEREZ**

PLANT MANAGER

James has been with Sukup for almost a decade, starting as summer help while in High School. Originally from nearby Hampton, IA James is the head football coach at West Fork High School in Sheffield.

As the Plant Manager James is acutely aware of local housing challenges especially in recruiting efforts. “People can go anywhere and get a job” with both renting and buying in severe shortage the options are basically take anything you can find or go elsewhere.

### **REBECCA BAKER**

COMMUNITY AND EVENT COORDINATOR

**“BRINGING MORE LOCAL OPTIONS WOULD INTEREST PEOPLE TO STAY IN THE AREA. SHEFFIELD HAS A LOT TO OFFER BUT NEEDS TO FIND MORE THINGS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE”.**

Rebecca lived in Minnesota and worked a hybrid in person/remote schedule during the pandemic. On the days she was in the office Rebecca commuted an hour to Sheffield while trying to find closer living options.



## 02. RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE, BUT CULTURAL AMENITIES AND SOCIAL EXPERIENCES ARE LIMITED FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

One of the questions posed in the community survey related to existing assets and quality of life was the following: Describe Sheffield's most unique assets. The majority of responses to this question mentioned "Sukup Manufacturing", "downtown shops and restaurants", and "wellness center". Others mentioned "parks", "golf course", and "pool", and a minority of responses said "I'm uncertain".

Select open-ended responses to the question include:

- *Having a large employer like Sukup in a small community like Sheffield is a great asset*
- *We have some great specialty shops and amenities for a small town. It's also a quieter town so great for families with younger children where they can play at the park and ride their bikes without having to worry.*
- *Good school system, nice amenities (golf course, restaurants, walking trail, aquatic center, wellness center)*

### **DOWNTOWN**

Downtown Sheffield has been a hub of activity. In recent years, many new businesses have opened up leaving very few vacancies in the downtown area. In November 2021, the Globe Gazette published an article titled "Downtown Sheffield Seeing Major Revival", documenting some of these recent developments. Kristine Trask, co-owner of Maple Lane, a small business in Sheffield, was quoted in the article saying. "It's great to see the town come alive again. Now I think more people are seeing that downtown has more to offer, so it's cool seeing the domino effect from that." Generally, the vibrancy of main street and/or downtown – especially in small or rural communities – is a key indicator of economic health, social opportunities, quality of life, and even community pride.

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After touring the community, it was evident to the Atlas/MEC team that the following were key assets in downtown Sheffield:

### **The West Fork Wharf**

Don't be surprised if you have a long wait without a reservation! This supper club style restaurant draws patrons from a wide region for its excellent food. The unique decor adds to the hometown experience featuring various high school memorabilia and a bar made out of the old gymnasium wood floorboards.



### **Block 10**

The old city hall building was completely and beautifully revived in 2017 and now is home to a high quality coffee shop and restaurant serving breakfast and lunch, boutique shopping upstairs, and a large banquet style hall in the basement perfect for larger events and gatherings.



### **Maple Lane**

Owned by two friends who grew up in Sheffield, Maple Lane is a refurbished furniture store that opens market style one weekend a month for customers to view the new treasures. Because of the unique pieces and limited window



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of opportunity, shops like this are known to cultivate a fanbase who are willing to travel long distances and regularly visit, making a whole day trip out of it.

### **Peachy Keehn**

Peachy Keehn is another example of homegrown talent and entrepreneurial success. Peachy Keehn is a clothing and home decor boutique that originally operated out of the owners basement, but eventually outgrew it and moved into its own space downtown.

### **Koselig**

Koselig is a specialty shop named after a Norwegian term meaning: the feeling of complete contentment provided by a person, place or atmosphere; experiencing happiness and personal well-being through a combination of nature, companionship & coziness.

### **Timeless Treasure**

Timeless Treasure is an antique store featuring more than 3,000 square feet of a diverse collection of items including vintage jewelry, scarves, glassware, stoneware, lamps and furniture, among other things.



**LOCATION**

One survey respondent in particular noted that Sheffield is in a “great location within north Iowa” located “just off I-35 and Highway 218” and “less than [two] hours away from multiple major [metropolitan] areas”.





**RETAIL TRADE ANALYSIS**

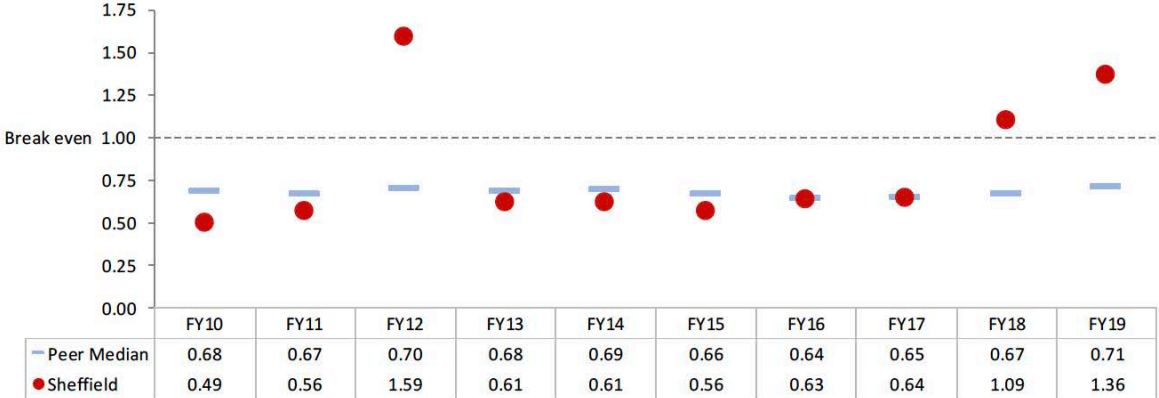
In a recent [report](#) written by Iowa State University’s Department of Economics, it was determined that Sheffield had realized an increase in real total taxable sales, number of reporting firms (annualized), average sales per capita, and average sales per firm between FY 2018 and FY 2019, even though the city experienced a slight population decline from 1,114 residents in FY 2018 to 1,108 residents in FY 2019.

	<b>FY2018</b>	<b>FY2019</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Real total taxable sales (\$)	15,042,153	18,658,695	24.0%
Number of reporting firms (annualized)	50	52	4.0%
Population	1,114	1,108	-0.5%
Average sales per capita (\$)	13,503	16,840	24.7%
Average sales per firm (\$)	303,882	360,554	18.6%

*No distinctions are made among residents of households, educational institutions, nursing homes, or other group quarters in the calculation of per capita sales and related indicators.*



Compared to peer cities, Sheffield also boasted a substantially higher pull factor ratio during the same period, as evidenced by the graph below.



A pull factor ration describes the size of a city’s retail customer base in relation to its own population size. The ratio is derived by dividing the estimated trade area capture value by the number of city residents. In FY 2018 and FY 2019, Sheffield’s pull factor ratio was greater than 1.0, which suggests the city’s merchants attract shoppers from outside the city.

**WHAT’S MISSING IN SHEFFIELD?**

It is evident that Sheffield has plentiful opportunities for recreation, including youth sports. However, beyond these types of activities, there are a limited number of social gathering spaces and cultural amenities to bring together people of all ages. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity. If residents are leaving Sheffield on the weekends to explore other areas, the city loses out on tax revenue and will struggle to support local business (i.e. restaurants and boutiques) in the long-term. However, knowing what residents do when they travel outside of Sheffield can and should influence new development throughout the community.

Related, one of the questions posed in the community survey was the following: “If you could wave a magic wand and add any one thing to Sheffield, what would it be?”, the most frequent response was a local grocery store; others stated housing and daycare. However, numerous responses describe more entertainment options and social gathering spaces such as new restaurants, bowling alley, dog park, and movie theater.







Select open-ended responses to the question include:

- *Have someone restore it! It's a beautiful piece of history*
- *If it could be a multipurpose space that could accommodate stage or film productions as well as other activities, that would be great.*
- *Opportunity for use for entertainment purposes or public meetings*
- *Community center where everyone could go especially kids*
- *I would love to see it restored to a theater again! They have one similar to this in a town about 30 min away that does well. I think it could be very successful in Sheffield!*

Of the 151 individuals who completed the online survey, 100% of them said that they believed the historic Grand Theater should be restored. Fortunately, the current owners of The Grand Theater reside locally in Sheffield, and are determined to form strategic partnerships and source public/private funding to revitalize the building.



## **PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES**

When asked “What type of specific programming or activities would you like to be offered in Sheffield?”, the majority of respondents shared an interest in more programming and activities for local youth, especially during the summer months. Some respondents shared an interest in more options for youth sports while others would like to see more opportunities for youth beyond athletics.

In general, respondents shared a desire for more amenities and social activities for people of all ages. The majority of respondents expressed they’d like to see more outdoor activities downtown - such as live music, street dances, beer gardens, and “Fridays on Main” events. Several respondents offered positive feedback on the existing food truck events, which presents an opportunity for growth.

### 03. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN STYMIED BY THE LACK OF ACCESS TO CHILDCARE IN SHEFFIELD.



Childcare is a significant factor in rural communities in terms of economic growth. Communities cannot thrive without adequate access to childcare. This is true for Sheffield, and was determined in a report published by Iowa State University Extension and

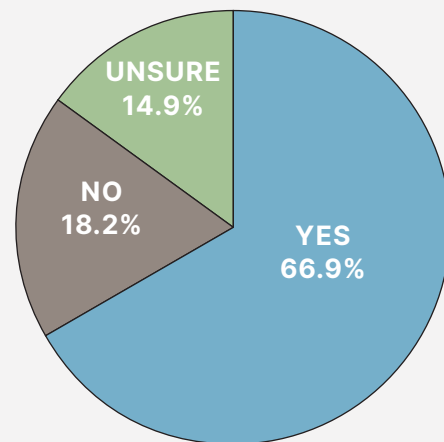
Outreach in 2019. The Rising Star Internship program attended meetings with Sheffield leaders and residents, and conducted a community-wide survey to gather information related to childcare access in the community.

A summary of findings from this report is demonstrated below:

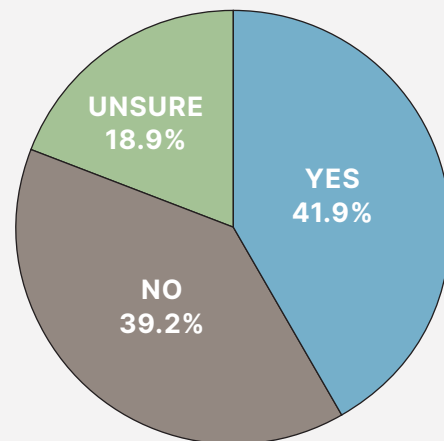
- Less than half of respondents (46%) work in Sheffield, but 89% have children of childcare age (10 years or younger)
- Ages 5-10 years old was the largest age group for survey respondents
- 60% of respondents said they needed full- (40 or more hours/ week) or part-time (half-day, five days/week) childcare
- 18% of respondents use an in-home childcare provider, 17% use a childcare center while a reported 20% of respondents have no current childcare provider
- Almost two thirds of respondents were very or somewhat likely to utilize a new childcare facility

For people who do not have access to childcare, like the 20% of respondents in the Rising Star survey, it is likely that a parent (most times the mother) is forced to stay home with the child or children. Therefore, limiting the amount of income a household can earn.

### HAVE YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU PERSONALLY KNOW, STRUGGLED TO FIND CHILDCARE IN SHEFFIELD?

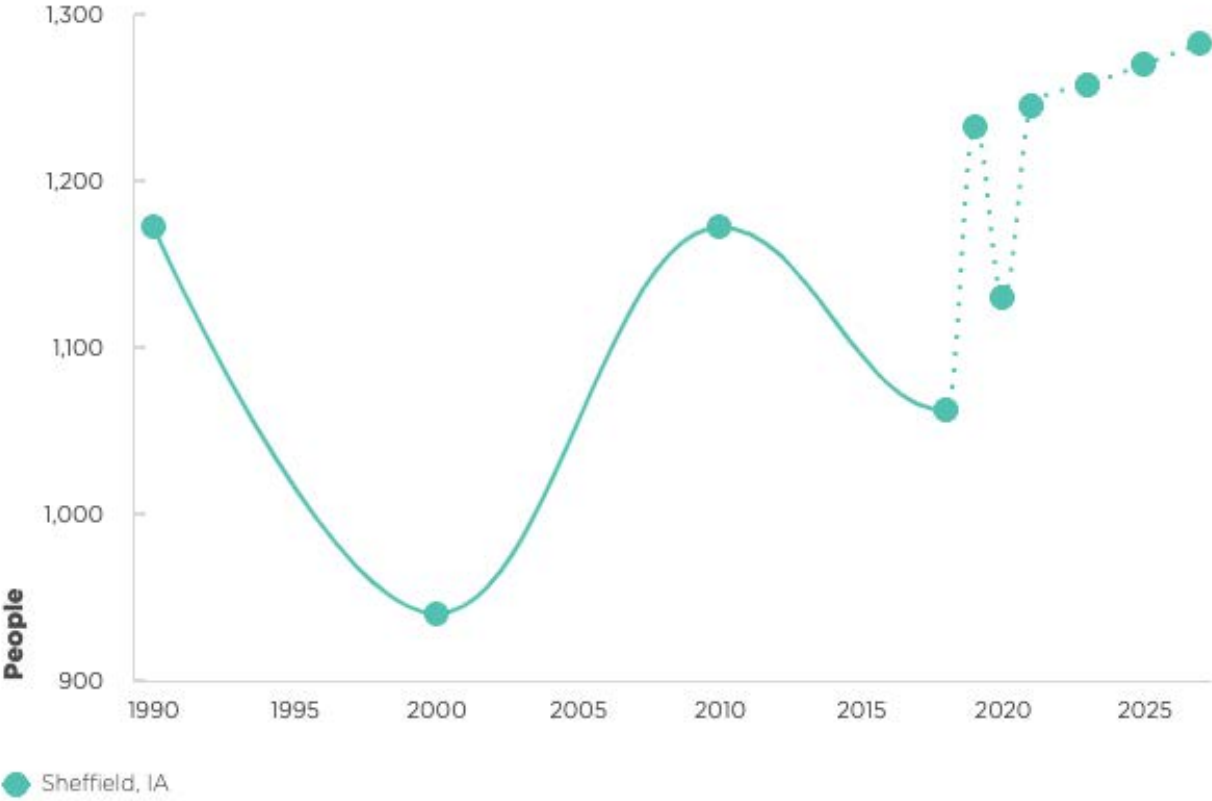


### ARE YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, IN NEED OF CHILDCARE NOW OR IN THE FUTURE?



This highlights that Sheffield must act quickly to begin the process of expanding childcare options for its current and future residents, especially as Sheffield's population is anticipated to increase over the next decade.

### Total Population

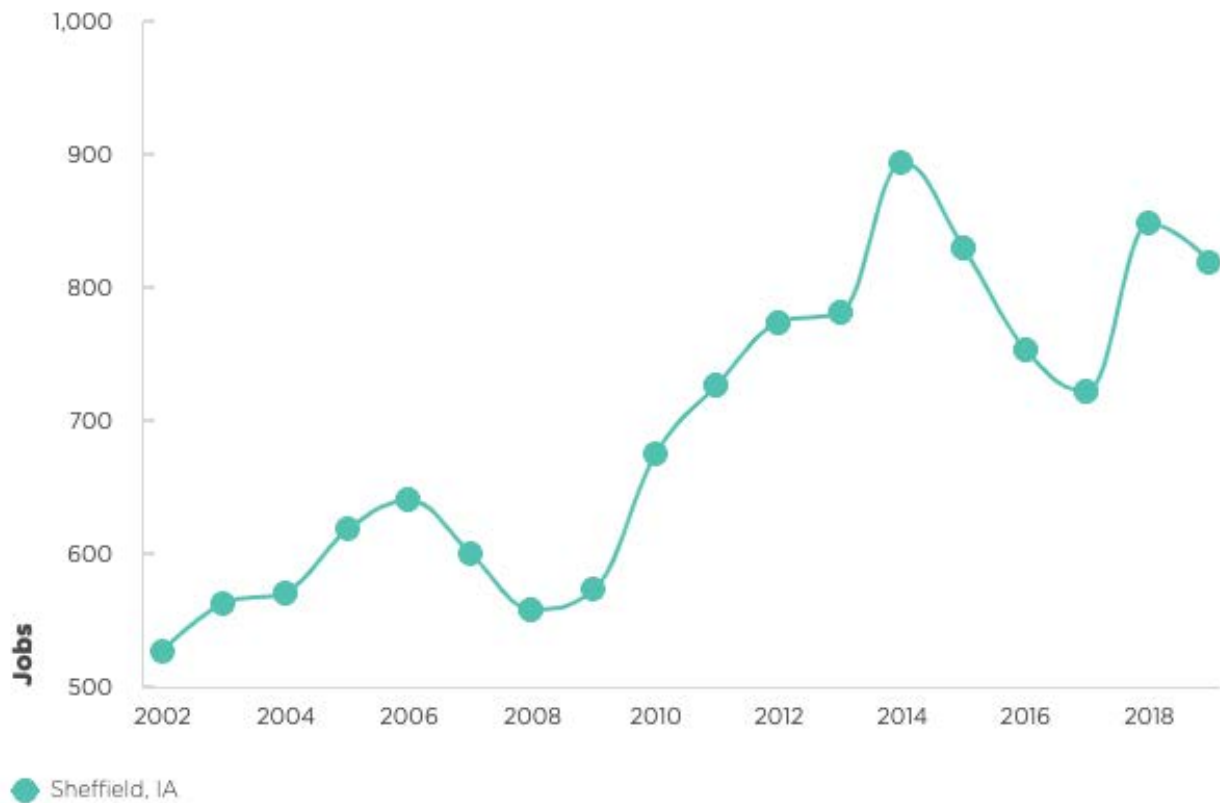


Sources: US Census Bureau; US Census Bureau ACS 5-year



The increase in the number of jobs in Sheffield over the past two decades also demonstrates an increasing need for childcare in the community. As more and more people find employment in Sheffield, it is likely that they already have children or will have children in the future, increasing the need for available childcare providers.

### Number of Jobs

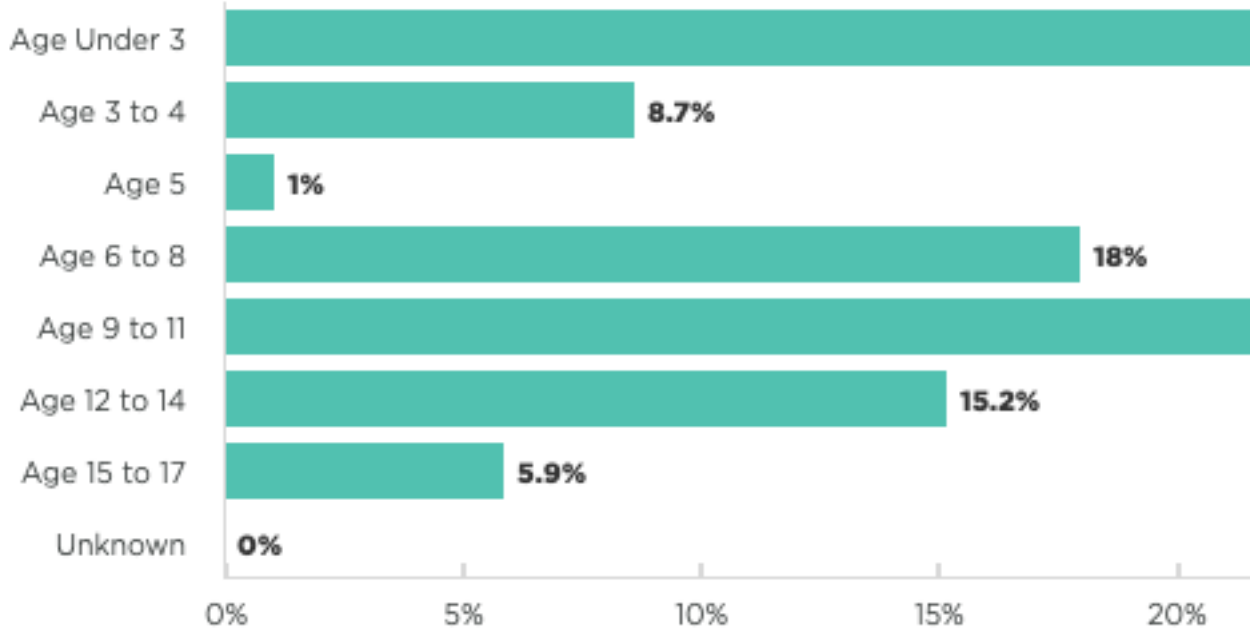


Sources: *LODES Version 7.5*



If you look at the population under 18 (considered children), a majority of the group in Sheffield is under the age of 3. However, almost 80% of children are age 11 or younger, indicating that childcare is still very much needed for a large portion of children in Sheffield.

**Population Under 18, by Age Group**





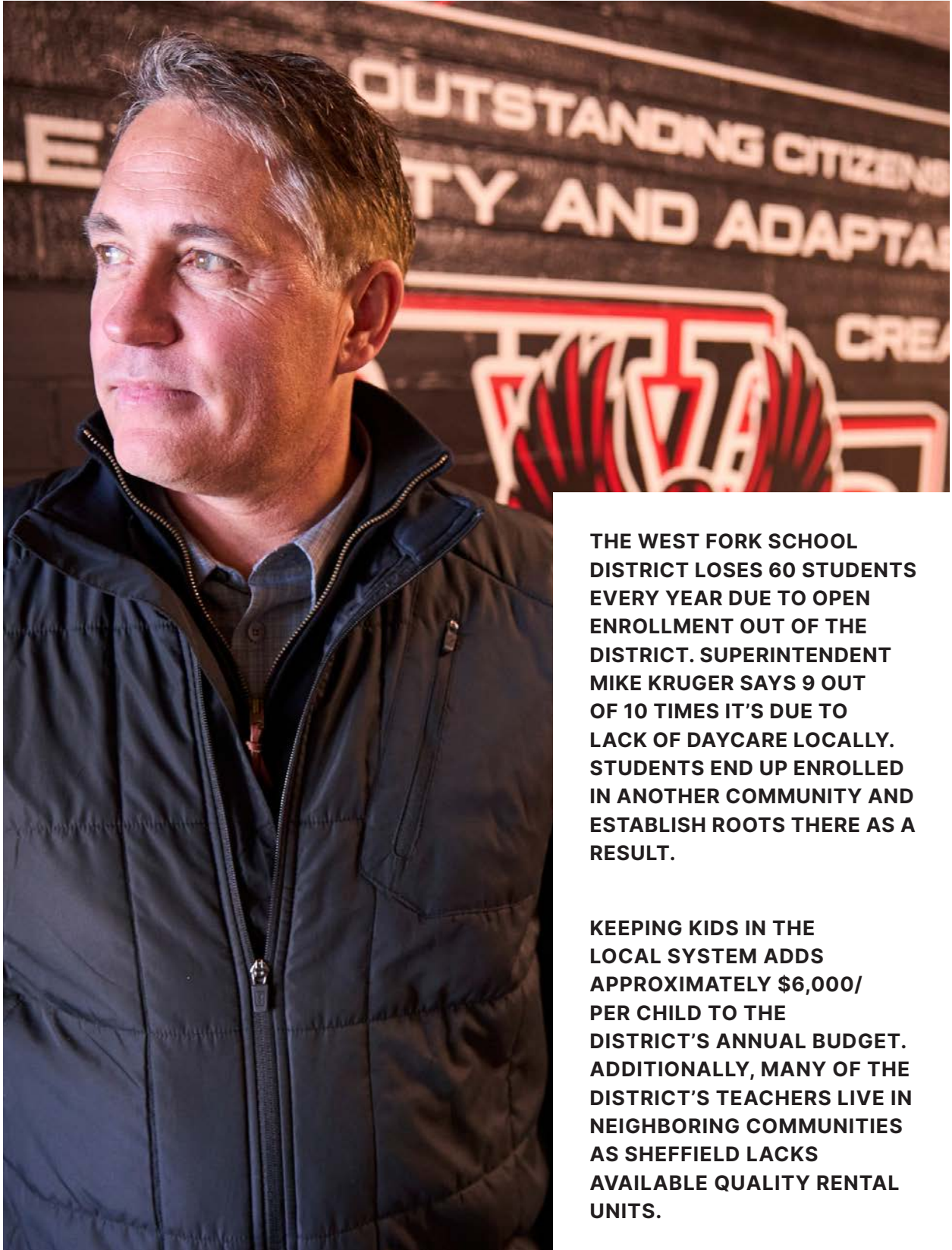
Atlas' findings support the results of Iowa State University's Rising Star report and suggest that the need for accessible childcare in Sheffield is evident and should be addressed. Not only will this meet the existing (and future) needs of the residents, but it will increase economic development activity that will allow Sheffield to continue to grow.

Atlas interviewed Sheffield residents regarding access to childcare and those that shared highlight how lack of childcare is not just a social services issue, but also a barrier to economic development growth.

Those profiles are on the following pages.



**WHEN TIFFANY CLARK WAS EXPECTING HER SECOND CHILD, SHE WASN'T SURE SHE COULD GET HER INFANT INTO APPLE DAYCARE WITH BIG SISTER, BAYLEE, DUE TO MULTI-YEAR WAITING LISTS.**



**THE WEST FORK SCHOOL DISTRICT LOSES 60 STUDENTS EVERY YEAR DUE TO OPEN ENROLLMENT OUT OF THE DISTRICT. SUPERINTENDENT MIKE KRUGER SAYS 9 OUT OF 10 TIMES IT'S DUE TO LACK OF DAYCARE LOCALLY. STUDENTS END UP ENROLLED IN ANOTHER COMMUNITY AND ESTABLISH ROOTS THERE AS A RESULT.**

**KEEPING KIDS IN THE LOCAL SYSTEM ADDS APPROXIMATELY \$6,000/ PER CHILD TO THE DISTRICT'S ANNUAL BUDGET. ADDITIONALLY, MANY OF THE DISTRICT'S TEACHERS LIVE IN NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES AS SHEFFIELD LACKS AVAILABLE QUALITY RENTAL UNITS.**

FUTURE VISION



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# future vision

A key pillar of the RPIC initiative is that “placemaking contributes to long-term investment and therefore supports a community’s resiliency, social stability, and collective identity”. Establishing a community’s collective identity and its goals for the future is generally articulated through a vision statement. The purpose of Sheffield’s vision statement is to inform and shape future investment, policies, programs, and planning efforts to ensure the will of its residents is represented in the decision-making process.







Based on the responses received during the stakeholder input phase—including visioning sessions, public information meetings, focus groups, online surveys, and interviews—the Atlas/MEC team suggests Sheffield consider adopting the following vision statement:

***Sheffield is a community of choice with opportunity for all ages and stages to connect, grow, and thrive.***

The steering committee should also consider the possibility of revising this statement to ensure the final, adopted vision statement is representative of the collective identity and goals of the community.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS



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# strategic opportunity areas

Several potential strategic opportunity areas emerged from quantitative research and stakeholder feedback. The following opportunity areas and potential projects/initiatives align with the bright and thriving future Atchison residents desire.

## 01. FOCUS ON THE LOCAL WORKFORCE AS THE TARGET AUDIENCE TO SUPPORT NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- Bring awareness of existing grants, loans, and other resources through the creation of a Homeownership Counseling program.
- Identify and development vacant infill lots to maximize shovel-ready ground in Sheffield
- Utilize city-owned land to development Attainable Workforce Housing options priced to meet the market where it is today



## 02. TRANSFORM THE GRAND THEATER INTO AN ANCHOR CULTURAL INSTITUTION

- Based on the overall vision, cultivate a compelling story for the revitalization of The Grand Theater
- Develop concepts for interior and exterior activation as well as programming for The Grand Theater
- Secure strategic partners to assist with redevelopment of the facility, business operations, and programming
- Identify viable funding opportunities to support the revitalization of The Grand Theater



### **03. LEVERAGE REGIONAL ASSETS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO **EXPAND ACCESS** TO CHILDCARE**

- Support the expansion of Sheffield's existing childcare center
- Obtain necessary funding to develop a new childcare facility
- Explore alternative childcare models that could be implemented to further support the needs of Sheffield residents