



2024

**COMMUNITY AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
ANNUAL REPORT &  
DEVELOPMENT  
RETROSPECTIVE**



Prepared By:  
**Ryan Moffatt, Director**

As we reflect on the successes of 2024, the City of West Des Moines has seen remarkable growth and progress through a variety of innovative projects and developments. From our expanding housing options to our commitment to sustainability, the city continues to evolve as a dynamic, thriving community. We've worked closely with partners to deliver residential, commercial, and recreational spaces that meet the needs of our residents while promoting responsible growth.



## Key 2024 Highlights

### Entertainment and Attractions

In 2024, West Des Moines saw the continued development of its entertainment and attractions, strengthening its position as a regional destination. Notable highlights include the opening of Top Golf and the revitalized Val Air Ballroom, now featuring new dining and nightlife options in its basement. These additions contribute to the city's vibrant atmosphere and provide new experiences for residents and visitors alike.

### Economic Development and Office Space Innovation

West Des Moines experienced significant progress in its office sector, with West Bank's new headquarters opening as a key anchor for future redevelopment efforts at Valley West Mall. The city also saw several existing office buildings undergo remodels, upgrading amenities to provide top-tier office space for new tenants. On the Grand Avenue corridor, construction began on multiple smaller office projects. The city set an all-time high in building permit valuations in 2024, driven by continued growth in the tech sector, particularly with Microsoft's expanding data centers. New light industrial developments along the Highway 5 corridor continue to make West Des Moines an attractive hub for business and industry.

### Quality of Life and Infrastructure Enhancements

2024 marked a year of significant progress in enhancing the city's quality of life. West Des Moines purchased the former church camp site on Grand Avenue to develop the future Legacy Woods arboretum and park. The completion of the Athene Pedestrian Bridge over the Raccoon River provides a new connection between Walnut Woods State Park and Raccoon River Park, while the Raccoon River East Greenway project began construction, contributing to the regional ICON water trails initiative. Collaborative partnerships with local organizations such as the WDM Chamber, Historic Valley Junction Foundation, and Greater Des Moines Partnership have fueled these successes, ensuring the city's long-term prosperity and vibrant community growth.

*"In 2024, we have made significant strides in ensuring that West Des Moines remains a vibrant place to live, work, and thrive," says **Ryan Moffatt, Director of Economic Development**. "By focusing on diverse housing options, green initiatives, and fostering a strong economic foundation, we are creating a sustainable, prosperous future for all."*

# RECENT ACCOLADES & RECOGNITION



## Regional Accolades

 <p><b>#3 Most Livable Metro</b> RentCafe, 2024 &amp; Des Moines Register</p>	 <p><b>#10 Best Place for Business and Careers</b> Forbes, 2024</p>	 <p><b>#8 Best City for Financial Independence</b> chooseFi, 2024</p>	 <p><b>#7 Safest City to Live in the U.S.</b> U.S. News &amp; World Report, 2024</p>
 <p><b>#4 Most Neighborly City in America</b> Neighbor.com, 2024</p>	 <p><b>#10 Best Metro for Millennials</b> CommercialCafe, 2024</p>	 <p><b>#8 Most Affordable U.S. Metro Area</b> Clever Real Estate, 2024</p>	 <p><b>Top 10 Cleanest City in America</b> Lawnstarter, 2024</p>
 <p><b>#1 Most Diverse suburb in Iowa</b> Niche, 2024</p>	 <p><b>#1 Best City in Iowa to Live</b> Money, 2024</p>	 <p><b>#1 Location for Young Professionals</b> Forbes, 2024</p>	 <p><b>#3 Best City to Retire in USA</b> Money, 2024</p>

## WDM Accolades

The City of West Des Moines continues to solidify its position as a leading destination for business growth, community development, and financial stability.

For the 27th consecutive year, West Des Moines has been recognized as the Business Record's **Best Community Most Conducive for Doing Business**.



## - AAA Bond Rating -

In addition to its business-friendly reputation, West Des Moines boasts an impressive **AAA bond rating from both Moody's and Standard & Poor's**.

This prestigious rating reflects the city's strong financial health and prudent fiscal management, ensuring continued investment in key public services and infrastructure projects that benefit the community as a whole.



## DEI Municipal Index Score

West Des Moines has also made significant strides in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, earning a **perfect 100 out of 100 DEI Municipal Index score**.

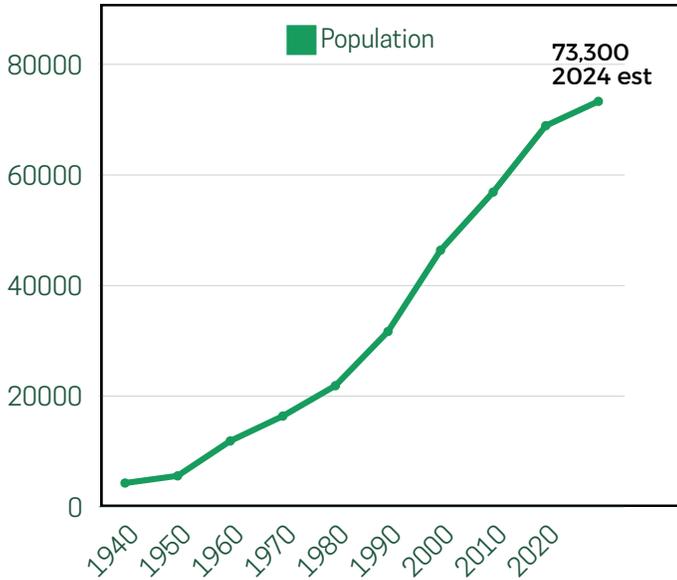
This recognition highlights the city's ongoing efforts to foster an inclusive environment where all residents, businesses, and visitors can thrive.



# RECENT STATISTICS



## Census Population Estimates - Population Growth



## Top 10 Cities in Iowa by Population

City	Rank	2024 Pop	2022 Pop	Density	Area	Change
Des Moines	1	209,232	211,048	2,373	88.2	-0.55%
Cedar Rapids	2	135,358	136,392	1,825	74.2	-0.44%
Davenport	3	99,921	100,339	1,563	63.9	-0.43%
Sioux City	4	85,710	85,402	1,456	58.9	-0.02%
Ankeny	5	76,435	72,433	2,412	31.7	2.66%
Iowa City	6	75,932	75,835	2,947	25.8	0.34%
West Des Moines	7	73,300	70,757	1,550	47.3	1.52%
Waterloo	8	66,383	66,525	1,078	61.6	-0.34%
Ames	9	65,419	65,582	2,319	28.2	-0.41%
Council Bluffs	10	62,268	62,322	1,449	43	-0.21%
Dubuque	11	58,618	58,906	1,877	31.2	-0.44%
Urbandale	12	47,112	46,661	2,089	22.5	0.82%
Marion	13	42,417	41,815	2,374	17.9	0.48%

World Census Data: 2024

## Educational Attainment of Population

**96.3%**

of population have a high school diploma or higher

**54.6%**

of people 25 years or older have a bachelors degree or higher

Source: US Census Bureau

**\$84,925**

Median Household Income

**34.6**

Median Age

### Average Commute Time



**22 Minutes**

### Total Number of Jobs



**66,050 Jobs**

### Unique Employers



**3,713 Employers**

### Estimated Daytime Population



**122,000+ People**

Source: Iowa Workforce Development

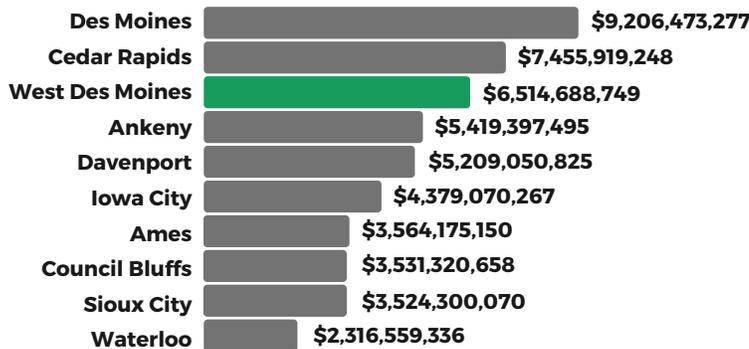
# RECENT STATISTICS CONT'D



## Major Employers by Number of Employees

<b>7,000</b> Wells Fargo & Company	<b>1,657</b> Athene USA Corporation	<b>1,464</b> Hy-Vee Inc	<b>1,328</b> West Des Moines School District	<b>1,085</b> FBL Financial Group Inc (Farm Bureau Financial)
<b>991</b> Microsoft	<b>889</b> American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company	<b>857</b> Sammons Financial Group (Midland National Life)	<b>758</b> The Iowa Clinic	<b>515</b> ITA Group Inc

## Taxable Valuation



Source: Iowa Workforce Development

## 2024 Hotel Occupancy and Average Daily Rate



The hotel occupancy in 2024 was 66.2%, a 4% increase from 2023 and an average daily rate of \$118.78, an increase of \$1 higher than the previous year. Occupancy was the highest of all DSM submarkets and average daily rate was 2nd highest of all DSM submarkets, behind only downtown DSM.

Source: Catch Des Moines

**Total City Land Area**  
**48.49 sq. miles**

### Total Taxable Assessed Property Valuation

→ **\$6,514,688,749**

### Total Hotel/Motel Taxes Collected

→ **\$5,106,547**

### City Property Tax Levy/Rate

→ **\$10.85** per 1,000 city levy in FY24-25

### Total Retail Sales Taxes Collected

→ **\$267,189,549**

Source: Iowa Department of Revenue

## Building Permit Valuation

Largely propelled by continued investment by the Microsoft Corporation on multiple data center campuses around the city, 2024 saw an all-time record-high building permit valuation of \$1,787,272,900. Nearly \$300 million in permit valuation was generated from non-data center projects in 2024.

Thanks to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenues generated by the 5 existing data center campuses, including those under construction in West Des Moines, the city has bonded for and constructed nearly \$200 million in new public improvements such as roads, public utilities, and fiber conduit, which has opened up thousands of acres of ground for future development.

### Number of New Economic Development Prospects Fielded

**65 Prospects Fielded**

### Number of Development Agreements Approved, Number of UR Plans Created and Amended

**11 Development Agreements  
13 UR Plans Created/Amended**

### Business Retention and Expansion Visits Conducted

**25 Business Retention Visits Conducted**

### Total Project Investment and Total Jobs from Projects having Development Agreements Approved

**\$585 million Total Project Investment  
Over 490 Jobs Created**

### PIF/RCF Activity

**\$743,000 in funding was approved for 12 projects in Valley Junction and on 8th St.**



## Completed in 2024



**Project Type: Renovated Commercial**

### Arcadia Building

The Arcadia Building is a newly remodeled and renovated office space offering tenants best-in-class modern amenities in a prime location. The Arcadia Building is an ideal choice for businesses looking for a prominent and upgraded office space in West Des Moines.

**Impact:** \$6,000,000+ renovation to existing 280,000 SF office building

**Location:** 7000 Vista Drive  
West Des Moines, IA



**Project Type: Public Recreational**

### Athene Pedestrian Bridge

The Athene Pedestrian Bridge opened in the fall of 2024 and offers significant benefits to the community and region by enhancing the connectivity of the trails system and promoting outdoor activity.

The iconic bridge provides a safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists, linking Raccoon River Park to Walnut Woods State Park, and providing a significant quality of life amenity for residents and visitors alike.

**Impact:** Regional Amenities and Quality of Life

**Location:** Raccoon River Park



**Project Type: Commercial**

### Legacy Bridge Office

The Legacy Bridge Private Family Office was completed in 2024 and continues the commercial development boom along the rapidly growing Grand Avenue corridor.

Legacy Bridge is wealth management consulting firm that constructed a 10,000 sq. ft. office space for their employee and client needs in a portion of the city that is seeing continued investment in office space development.

**Location:** 5810 Grand Avenue  
West Des Moines, IA



## South Branch Business Park

The South Branch Business Park is a new light industrial development that is strategically located along the Highway 5 bypass with convenient access to I-80 and 35. Phase I was completed in 2024 and consists of an 80,000 sq. ft. speculative warehouse space that was recently fully leased up. Future phases will include additional light industrial high cube warehouse spaces to house expanding businesses.

**Impact:** 80,000 SF valued at \$2,500,000

**Location:** 3075 SE Army Post Road  
West Des Moines, IA



**Project Type: Commercial**

## Top Golf Opening

Top Golf opened its doors in West Des Moines in 2024, transforming the local entertainment scene. The expansive facility features 102 climate-controlled hitting bays, cutting-edge technology for interactive games, and a diverse menu from its full-service restaurant and bar.

The addition of Topgolf makes West Des Moines a premier destination for golfing enthusiasts, enhancing the local recreational landscape.

**Impact:** Recreational leisure services to visitors and complementary partnerships for businesses

**Location:** 7680 Coachlight Drive  
West Des Moines, IA



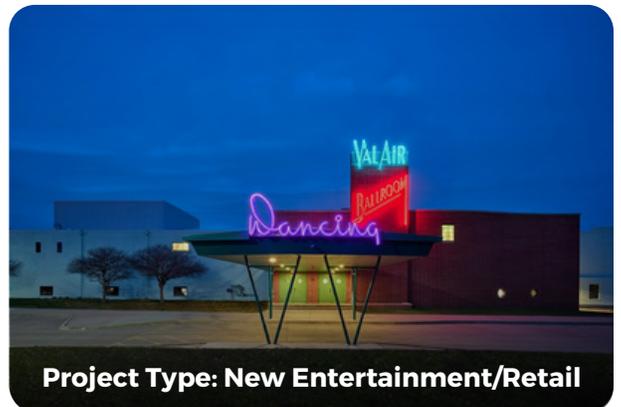
**Project Type: New Entertainment/Retail**

## Val Air Ballroom

The Val Air Ballroom received a stunning, historically compatible renovation that revitalized its classic charm while enhancing modern amenities. The iconic venue features updated décor, improved acoustics, and state-of-the-art sound and lighting, making it perfect for weddings, concerts, and corporate events. Two restaurant and tavern spaces are in the lower level of the building, providing food & entertainment options to this historic part of the community.

**Impact:** \$15,000,000 reinvestment, 31,000 SF

**Location:** 301 Ashworth Road  
West Des Moines, IA



**Project Type: New Entertainment/Retail**



**Project Type: Commercial**

## West Bank Office

The West Bank Office Headquarters is a very visible construction project that was completed in 2024 and embodies modern design and functionality. The state-of-the-art office features collaborative workspaces, gathering places, a rooftop courtyard and amenity deck, and advanced technology to support a dynamic work environment. This stately building serves as a central hub for the bank's operation, with a bank branch located on the first floor. This project will help to anchor efforts to redevelop the Valley West Mall corridor.

**Impact:** 62,000 SF valued at \$30,000,000

**Location:** 3320 Westtown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA

## Under Construction

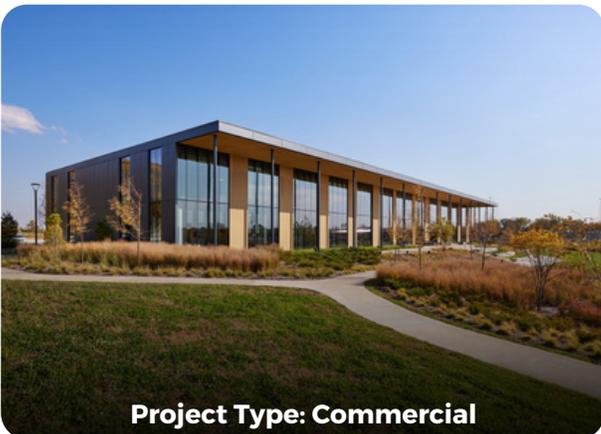


**Project Type: Commercial**

## Microsoft Data Centers

West Des Moines is home to five hyperscale Microsoft Data Center campuses, with a sixth location planned soon. This substantial investment by the Microsoft Corporation has provided hundreds of millions in new taxable valuation and revenue to the city and school districts, created hundreds of permanent jobs and thousands of construction jobs, and has helped the city construct nearly \$200 million in new public improvements that have opened up thousands of new acres of the city for development. The presence of a major technology company making sizeable investments attracts additional business development and is anticipated to stimulate growth in surrounding areas, providing a long-term boost to West Des Moines economic vitality.

**Impact:** Over \$5 billion in total construction value



**Project Type: Commercial**

## Oaks on Grand Office Phase II

The Oaks on Grand Business Park provides a stunning new Class A office option to perspective tenants along the rapidly growing Grand Avenue corridor. The three-phase project offers modern commercial office spaces in sleekly designed buildings. Phase I was completed in 2023 and is fully occupied.

Phase II commenced construction in 2024 and will be complete in 2025 and is entirely pre-leased. With ample parking and convenient access to I-35, it provides an ideal location for office tenants to relocate.

**Impact:** 70,000 SF valued at \$15,000,000+ anticipated valuation

**Location:** 5727 Grand Ave, West Des Moines, IA



## Porsche of Des Moines Dealership

The construction of Iowa's first Porsche dealership in West Des Moines marks an exciting milestone for automotive enthusiasts in the region. This state-of-the-art facility will showcase the latest Porsche models, offering a luxurious showroom and advanced service areas. Designed with elegance and functionality in mind, the dealership aims to provide an exceptional customer experience. The project not only elevates the local automotive landscape but also symbolizes a growing demand for high-performance luxury vehicles in Iowa.

**Impact:** 25,000 SF  
West Des Moines' only new car dealership



## Raccoon River East Greenway (ICON watertrails)

The Raccoon River East Greenway 1st Street Access, part of the ICON Water Trails project, is a transformative initiative that enhances outdoor recreation and provides access and exposure to use the area's waterways. This vibrant greenway connects communities along the Raccoon River, providing a network of water trails that promote active lifestyles and connect people with nature. By creating these recreational spaces on land that was otherwise not utilized, the project supports local tourism, provides a workforce attractant, and an important quality of life amenity, all while preserving the natural beauty of the river ecosystem.

**Impact:** \$1,900,000 construction cost  
**Location:** 400 Block of 1st Street, West Des Moines, IA

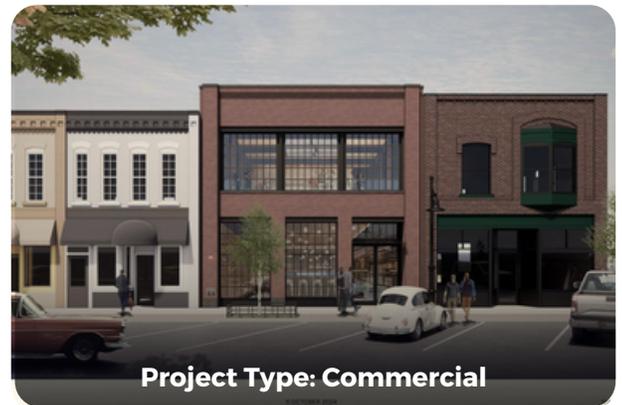


## Proposed Projects

### 122 5th Street

While preservation of historic buildings in the Valley Junction district is always preferred, years of deferred maintenance had taken its toll on the previous building at 122 5th Street. The building had become a safety hazard, and the developer of the property made the tough decision to demolish the building in 2024. A new 2-story building that will mimic the historic feel and architecture of the area and offer space for a new restaurant and tavern concept that will contribute to the district's vitality. Construction is anticipated to start in 2025 and be completed in early 2026.

**Impact:** 6,000 SF, renovation costs \$3,000,000  
**Project Location:** 122 5th Street, West Des Moines, IA





**Project Type: Recreational**

## Legacy Woods

The Legacy Woods Arboretum and Heritage Center is planned on the former “church camp” site at Grand Avenue and Fuller Road. The city purchased the property to create a peaceful green space, nature sanctuary, and arboretum that will inspire, educate, and connect the community with the beauty of Iowa’s natural landscape. The site is adjacent and will pay homage to the historic Jordan House, which is one of the most storied properties in West Des Moines. Private fundraising is underway to construct additional improvements including the Heritage Center, which will serve as a venue for events and exhibits.

**Impact:** 30 acres, cost TBD

**Location:** 2296 Grand Ave, West Des Moines, IA



**Project Type: Recreational**

## MidAmerican Energy RecPlex

The proposed expansion to the MidAmerican Energy RecPlex will add a 3rd sheet of ice and seating for up to 3,000 spectators. Indoor ice space is at a premium in the Des Moines metro area, and an additional sheet of ice is in high demand as ice sports prove to be some of the most popular activities at the facility. The RecPlex generates \$25-\$35 million to the area annually and this expansion will continue the catalytic economic impact. The project is anticipated to start construction in 2025 and will be completed in 2026. Other improvements include new meeting spaces, tenant suites, locker room space, a training center, and a new “grab and go, convenience store venue

**Impact:** 100,000 SF, \$30-40 million

**Location:** 6500 Grand Ave, West Des Moines, IA



**Project Type: New Entertainment/Retail**

## The Grand Experience

The Grand Experience is an exciting master-planned development that will include an 80,000 sq. ft. indoor water park, a family entertainment center, a 35,000 sq. ft. conference center, and a minimum 260-room hotel project.

The Grand Experience has the potential to be one of the largest private development projects in the city’s history and has been called a game-changer for the city. Look for construction to get underway as soon as 2026 with full buildout of the development anticipated to take 5-8 years.

**Impact:** \$400,000,000+

**Location:** 7100-7400 Grand Ave, West Des Moines, IA

# HOUSING ACTIVITY



The city's efforts in urban planning and sustainable development were recognized with the **Thriving Communities Designation**. This honor emphasizes West Des Moines' dedication to creating vibrant, accessible neighborhoods that promote quality of life, foster economic prosperity, and encourage community engagement. With these prestigious accolades, West Des Moines continues to build on its legacy as a forward-thinking, resilient, and inclusive community. This city is setting a precedent in housing with the introduction of a Radon Mitigation Program for qualified households in 2025.

## 2024 Housing Programs

- Historic WDM Home Improvement Program
- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)
- Metro Home Improvement Program
- Dallas County Housing Trust Fund
- Transit Pass Program
- Neighborhood Finance Corporation
- Housing Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts

While West Des Moines is an active member and participant, the city no longer administers the Dallas County Local Housing Trust Fund and Metro Home Improvement Program. This change supports additional resources to tackle housing solutions specifically for WDM.

## Percentage of Housing Rental vs. Owner Occupied

West Des Moines offers a selection of housing options from single-family, to mixed-use housing.

**Owner Occupied**

**Renter Occupied**



Source: US Census Bureau

# 30,000+

Total Housing Units in Community

# 255

Total Dwelling Units Added in 2024

Source: US Census Bureau

## Multi-Family Housing Rent & Occupancy Rates

**\$1,263**  
Median Rent

**95.3%**  
Occupancy Rate

Source: MMG Real Estate Advisors



## 2024 Partnerships

The city partnered with Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity and HOME, Inc. for the new construction of 4 new single-family owner-occupied homes that will be available in 2025.



# 73

**Total Number of Historic WDM Housing Fund homes Assisted**

### 545 8th Street Completion

Partnership with Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity to fully renovate a 100-year old home from a duplex to a single-family residence for affordable home ownership.



Before



After



Before



After

### 7th Street Completion

Home interior and exterior renovation project for single-family residence.



Before



After

### 4th Street Completion

Home interior and exterior renovation project for single-family residence.

# COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM



**Ryan L. Moffatt, AICP**  
Community and Economic  
Development Director



**J. Bradley Munford**  
Business Development  
Coordinator



**Christine Gordon, AICP**  
Housing & Community  
Development Manager



**Jennie Rohe**  
Housing Planner



**Bryce Johnson**  
Business Development  
Coordinator

## Our Mission

*“The Community and Economic Development department will plan and promote an economically strong and vibrant community through business retention and development, housing initiatives, redevelopment, and community promotion.”*