



# STAR Certification Results Report

City of Cedar Rapids, IA  
Certified 4-STAR Community  
July 2018



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# The STAR Community Rating System

The STAR Community Rating System™ (STAR) is the nation's leading framework and certification program for evaluating community-wide sustainability, encompassing economic, environmental, and social performance measures. Sustainability means different things to different people, so STAR provides a clear, data-driven approach to assessing communities' sustainability efforts. The STAR framework helps communities assess their efforts in key areas and define sustainability for themselves. The rating system is maintained by STAR Communities, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC that works to evaluate, improve, and certify sustainable communities in North America.

STAR was developed for local governments by local governments. Nearly two hundred volunteers representing fifty cities and counties, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, national associations, universities, utilities, and private corporations contributed thousands of hours and diverse expertise to the development of Version 1.0 of the STAR Community Rating System, which was released in 2012. Experts served on steering, technical, and ad hoc committees, which led to the development of the framework, methodologies for measurement, credits, and requirements for achieving and maintaining a STAR Community Rating®. Following a similar methodology, Version 2.0 of STAR was developed over the course of 18 months and officially released in August 2016.

To promote continuous improvement towards sustainability, STAR Communities has developed a certification program based off of the measures in the rating system. To apply for a STAR Community Rating, the town, city, or county government must be the primary applicant. Staff and/or community representatives fill out an online application by providing data on a variety of community sustainability indicators and coordinating data collection from both governmental agencies and community partners.

Communities choose the measures that they would like to report on and are not required to submit on all measures. This allows local governments to report on the objectives that are most relevant to their communities. Once the community submits a completed application, STAR Communities' verification team reviews and verifies all measures for accuracy and then assigns a rating based upon a total cumulative score of points. A STAR Community Rating lasts four years from certification date.

GOAL AREA	PURPOSE & INTENT
Built Environment	Achieve livability, choice, and access for all where people live, work, and play
Climate & Energy	Reduce climate impacts through adaptation and mitigation efforts and increase resource efficiency
Education, Arts & Community	Empower vibrant, educated, connected, and diverse communities
Economy & Jobs	Create equitably shared prosperity and access to quality jobs
Equity & Empowerment	Ensure equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity for all citizens
Health & Safety	Strengthen communities to be healthy, resilient, and safe places for residents and businesses
Natural Systems	Protect and restore the natural resource base upon which life depends
Innovation & Process	Recognize important local government practices and processes that guide the implementation of sustainability and accelerate achievement of STAR goals

Table 1: The Rating System is divided into eight thematic sustainability goal areas,



# The STAR Framework & Evaluation Measures

The STAR Community Rating System is built on a framework of sustainability goals, objectives, and evaluation measures. Version 2.0 of the rating system contains seven sustainability goals, plus a separate Innovation & Process section. Under each goal, there are either six or seven objectives. These forty-five objectives are the core thematic areas that contain evaluation measures and metrics.

Built Environment	Climate & Energy	Economy & Jobs	Education, Arts, & Community	Equity & Empowerment	Health & Safety	Natural Systems
BE-1: Ambient Noise & Light	CE-1: Climate Adaptation	EJ-1: Business Retention & Development	EAC-1: Arts & Culture	EE-1: Civic Engagement	HS-1: Active Living	NS-1: Green Infrastructure
BE-2: Community Water Systems	CE-2: Greenhouse Gas Mitigation	EJ-2: Green Market Development	EAC-2: Community Cohesion	EE-2: Civil & Human Rights	HS-2: Community Health	NS-2: Biodiversity & Invasive Species
BE-3: Compact & Complete Communities	CE-3: Greening the Energy Supply	EJ-3: Local Economy	EAC-3: Educational Opportunity & Attainment	EE-3: Environmental Justice	HS-3: Emergency Management & Response	NS-3: Natural Resource Protection
BE-4: Housing Affordability	CE-4: Energy Efficiency	EJ-4: Quality Jobs & Living Wages	EAC-4: Historic Preservation	EE-4: Equitable Services & Access	HS-4: Food Access & Nutrition	NS-4: Outdoor Air Quality
BE-5: Infill & Redevelopment	CE-5: Water Efficiency	EJ-5: Targeted Industry Development	EAC-5: Social & Cultural Diversity	EE-5: Human Services	HS-5: Health Systems	NS-5: Water in the Environment
BE-6: Public Parkland	CE-6: Local Government GHG & Resource Footprint	EJ-6: Workforce Readiness	EAC-6: Aging in the Community	EE-6: Poverty Prevention & Alleviation	HS-6: Hazard Mitigation	NS-6: Working Lands
BE-7: Transportation Choices	CE-7: Waste Minimization				HS-7: Safe Communities	

Table 2: Version 2.0 of the STAR framework of goals and objectives

STAR objectives are achieved through attainment of two types of evaluation measures: community-level outcomes and local actions. Community-level outcomes are measurable indicators that depict a community's progress toward a preferred state or condition within the STAR objective it supports. Outcomes are represented as trend lines, targets, or thresholds in the rating system. Examples include reductions in energy use or increased transportation access.

Local actions describe the range of decisions and investments that a local government or community can make, or the activities that they can engage in, that are essential to making progress within objectives. Local actions in the rating system focus on the key interventions that move the needle towards STAR's identified outcomes. Since many public, private, and non-profit organizations within the community contribute towards advancing sustainability goals, the rating system recognizes these efforts, not only those of the local government.

There are nine defined action types in the rating system. Preparatory actions are foundational steps that a community should take first to assess the community's needs and trends, identify and execute policy and regulatory changes, and strengthen partnerships and collaborations in order to effectively deploy resources and investments. Implementation actions are the programs and services, enforcement and incentive mechanisms, and infrastructure investments a community makes in order to efficiently and equitably move the needle towards the desired outcomes.



## Cedar Rapids' STAR Journey

Sustainability is a fundamental component of building a strong community, and it is embedded in the core of the work of the City of Cedar Rapids. In 2012, the Cedar Rapids City Council adopted *Guiding Principles of Sustainability for the City of Cedar Rapids*. To help promote and encourage these principles in daily operations and throughout the community, the iGreenCR program was created. Through ongoing iGreenCR initiatives, goals, measurements, and partnerships, the City of Cedar Rapids is working to become a national model for environmental excellence.

City leaders identified STAR Communities as the ideal framework to establish benchmarks and direct ongoing sustainability efforts. The City began collecting the data needed to complete the STAR certification application in March of 2017. The City's Sustainability Integration Committee, with support of the City Manager and City Council, led the effort to collect and analyze more than 500 data points that were then submitted for assessment. Individuals from throughout the City's many departments, community partners, and other stakeholders supported these efforts. Key community partners include:

- Alliant Energy
- Cedar Rapids Community School District
- Cedar Rapids Linn County Solid Waste Agency
- Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance
- Cedar Rapids Public Library
- Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Hawkeye Area Community Action Program
- The Heritage Agency on Aging
- Kirkwood Community College
- Linn County
- United Way of East Central Iowa
- UnityPoint Health – St. Luke's Hospital

In June 2018, Cedar Rapids was awarded a 4-STAR Community Rating and was recognized for national excellence in sustainability with a score of 458.5 out of a possible 750 points. The certification was issued under Version 2.0 of the rating system. The City of Cedar Rapids is the fourth Iowa community to receive a 4-STAR Rating, and the sixth Iowa community to achieve certification. Cedar Rapids is the first Iowa community—and fourth community in the country—to achieve Version 2.0 certification.



Creating a green, sustainable city requires a commitment from the local government, as well as every business, organization, and individual within the broader community. Not only can sustainable practices create a healthier, happier environment for residents, but when public and private organizations become better stewards of the environment, they create positive economic benefits for themselves and the entire community. Through ongoing efforts, the City of Cedar Rapids will continue to build on established successes and focus on building a culture of sustainability within city operations, serving as an example for the community.



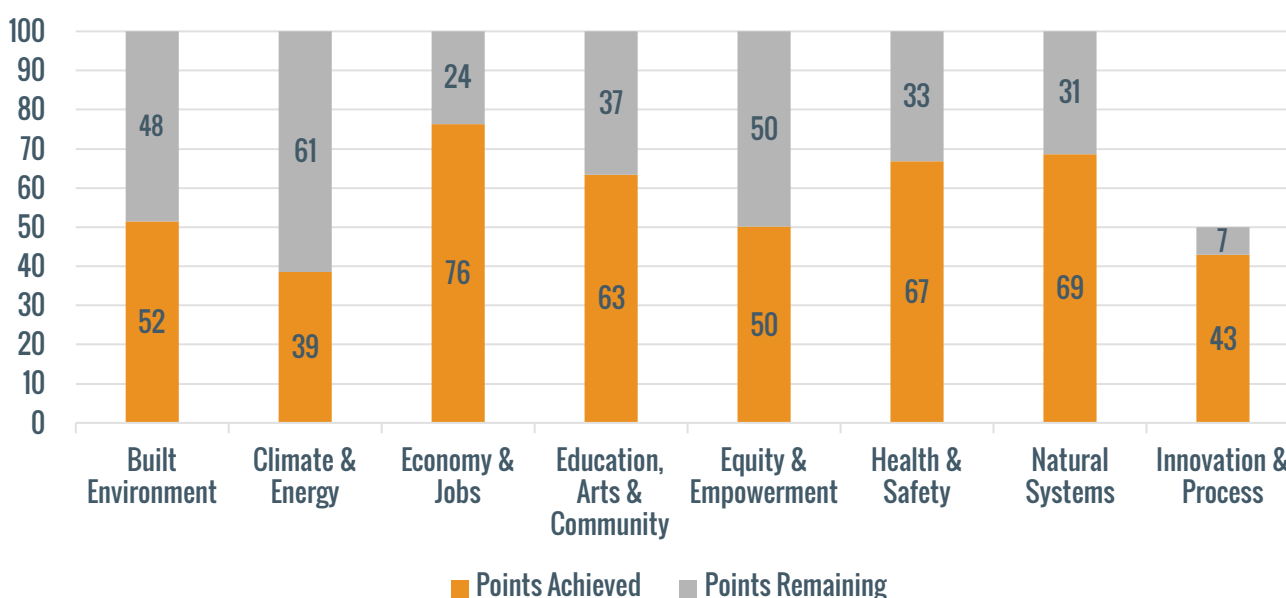
## Overview of Cedar Rapids' Score

Communities pursuing STAR certification accumulate points by demonstrating their achievements across seven goal areas. Each community chooses which measures to report on from a menu of over five hundred quantitative outcome and qualitative action measures. This allows local governments to report on the measures that are most important and relevant to their communities. STAR Communities performs a rigorous third party verification of each application to ensure conformity with national standards and best practices before certifying a community. There are three STAR certification levels: 3-STAR Community (250-449 points), 4-STAR Community (450-649 points), and 5-STAR Community (650+ points).

On June 4, 2018, Cedar Rapids received a Certified 4-STAR Community Rating by earning 458.5 points under Version 2.0 of the STAR Community Rating System. The chart below illustrates the City's performance across all goal areas, with the highest scores in Economy & Jobs and Built Environment.

Goal Area	Points Available	Points Achieved	Percent Achieved
Built Environment	100	51.5	52%
Climate & Energy	100	38.6	39%
Economy & Jobs	100	76.4	76%
Education, Arts & Community	100	63.4	63%
Equity & Empowerment	100	50.1	50%
Health & Safety	100	66.8	67%
Natural Systems	100	68.7	69%
Innovation & Process	50	42.9	86%
Totals	750	458.5	61%

Table 3: Cedar Rapids' STAR Certification final score by goal area



Graph 1: Cedar Rapids' STAR Certification, total points by goal area



## National Context for Cedar Rapids' Score

Hundreds of communities are using the STAR Community Rating System, and as of July 2018, seventy-three have achieved STAR certification. Four are 5-STAR communities, thirty are 4-STAR communities, and thirty-nine are 3-STAR communities.

All certified communities worked to comprehensively document the efforts they are making to create a more sustainable place. Cedar Rapids' STAR certification is a testament to the City's commitment to creating a better community for all of its citizens and will serve as an important benchmark from which to move forward.

### 5-STAR COMMUNITIES

- Baltimore, MD
- Cambridge, MA
- Northampton, MA
- Seattle, WA

### 4-STAR COMMUNITIES

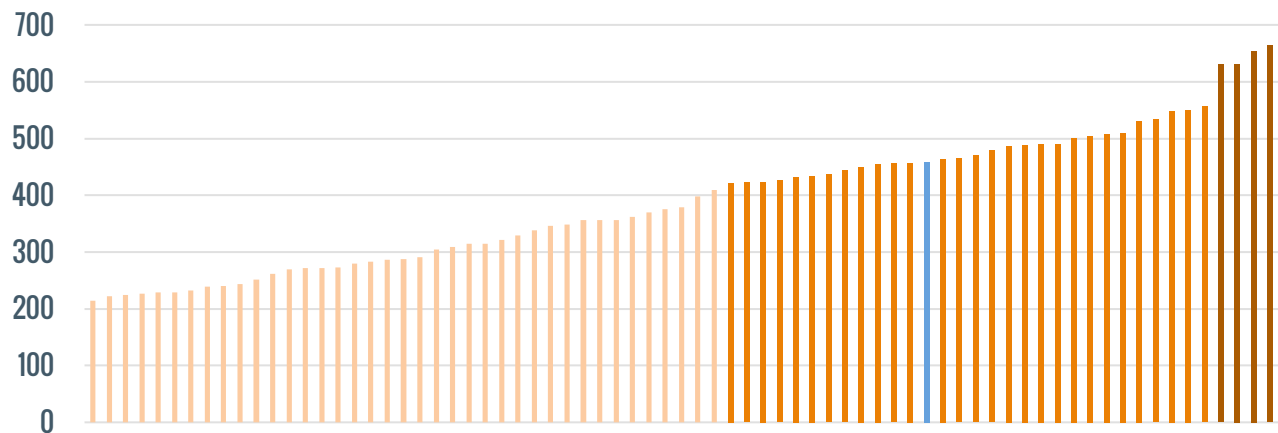
- Ann Arbor, MI
- Austin, TX
- Bellevue, WA
- Boise, ID
- Broward County, FL
- Burlington, VT
- Cedar Rapids, IA
- Columbus, OH
- Davenport, IA
- Devens, MA
- Dubuque, IA
- Durham, NC
- Evanston, IL
- Henderson, NV
- Indianapolis, IN
- Iowa City, IA
- Kansas City, MO
- King County, WA
- Las Vegas, NV

- Lawrence, KS
- Louisville, KY
- Memphis/Shelby County, TN
- Plano, TX
- Portland, OR
- Raleigh, NC
- Steamboat Springs, CO
- Tacoma, WA
- Tucson, AZ
- Washington, DC
- West Palm Beach, FL

### 3-STAR COMMUNITIES

- Abington Township, PA
- Albany, NY
- Annapolis, MD
- Atlanta, GA
- Beaverton, OR
- Birmingham, AL
- Blue Island, IL
- Chandler, AZ
- Charles City, IA
- Cleveland, OH
- Columbia, MO
- Columbia, SC
- Denton, TX

- Des Moines, IA
- Durango, CO
- El Cerrito, CA
- Fayetteville, AR
- Fort Collins, CO
- Goleta, CA
- Houston, TX
- Las Cruces, NM
- Lee County, FL
- Monroe County, FL
- New Bedford, MA
- Palm Bay, FL
- Park Forest, IL
- Peoria, AZ
- Phoenix, AZ
- Pinecrest, FL
- Reading, PA
- Reno, NV
- Riverside, CA
- Rosemount, MN
- San Antonio, TX
- St. Louis, MO
- St. Petersburg, FL
- Wichita, KS
- Winston-Salem, NC
- Woodbridge, NJ



Graph 2: Final scores of all certified STAR communities as of June 2018. Cedar Rapids is shown in blue. Scores are normalized to V2.0 total points by percentage achieved, for comparability between V1.x and V2.0.





## Comparative Analysis of Cedar Rapids' Score

A closer examination of Cedar Rapids' point totals in each goal area compared to other certified communities reveals areas of stronger performance as well as opportunities for improvement. The box-and-whisker graph below illustrates how Cedar Rapids performed in each goal area relative to other certified communities.

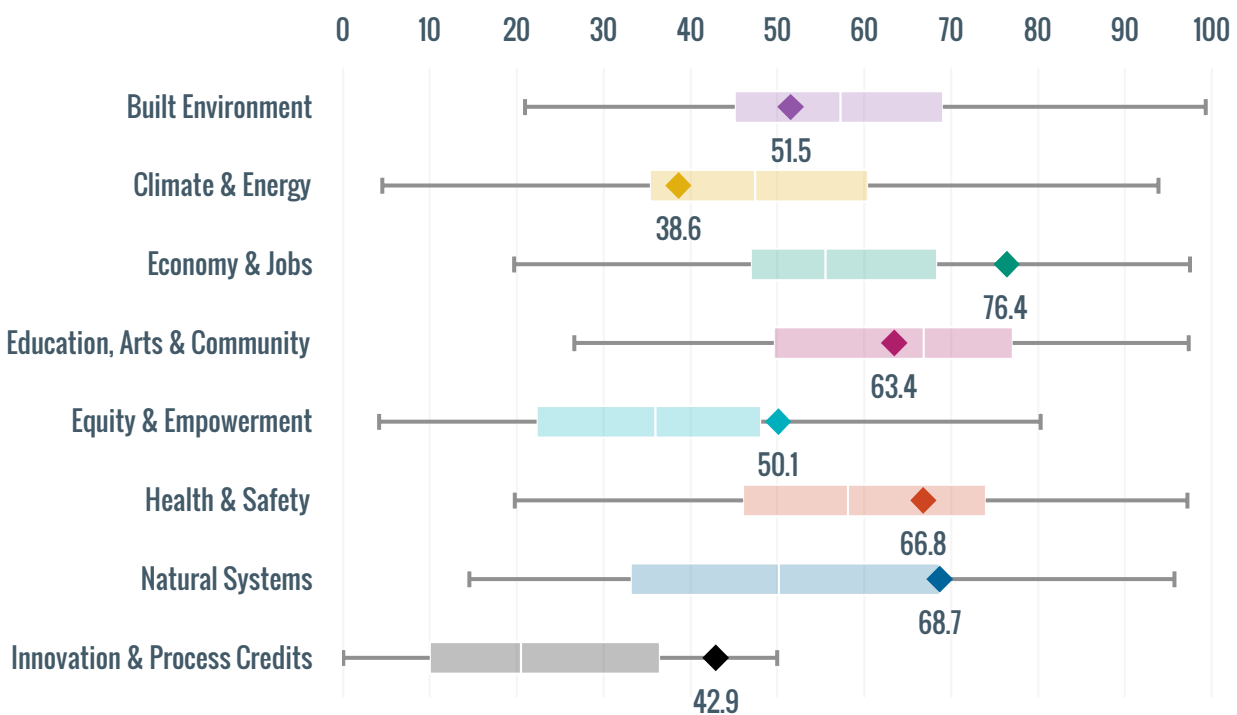
The box-and-whisker graph is divided into quartiles, with the middle division representing the median achieved score and the outer ends on the "whiskers" representing the lowest and highest achieved score. The section from the end of the whisker on the low end to the beginning of the box represents the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, the first half of the box represents scores from the 25<sup>th</sup>-50<sup>th</sup> percentile, the second half of the box represents score from the 50<sup>th</sup>-75<sup>th</sup> percentile, and the whisker on the higher end represents scores in the 75<sup>th</sup>-100<sup>th</sup> percentile.

The smaller the box, the closer the distribution of scores, while a longer box indicates that the scores are more dispersed.

Cedar Rapids' highest score in terms of total number of points and relative performance to other communities was Economy & Jobs, with a score of 76.4 points, landing above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. Innovation & Process was also high scoring both overall and relatively speaking. Health & Safety and Natural Systems received scores within the 50<sup>th</sup>-75<sup>th</sup> percentile, indicating a solid performance with some room to improve.

The City scored lowest in Climate & Energy, with a score falling just above the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. Built Environment and Education, Arts & Community also fell below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile mark. In Equity & Empowerment, the City performed better than most certified communities, but the low total amount of points shows that there is room for improvement here. These goal areas represent the City's biggest opportunities for the future.

The next section will go a step further, and break down the scores within each goal area and look at Cedar Rapids' performance in the forty-five STAR objectives.



Graph 3: Comparative analysis of Cedar Rapids' goal area scores. The diamonds indicate Cedar Rapids' score in each goal area. The colored boxes represent the 25<sup>th</sup>-75<sup>th</sup> percentile of all certified communities' scores.







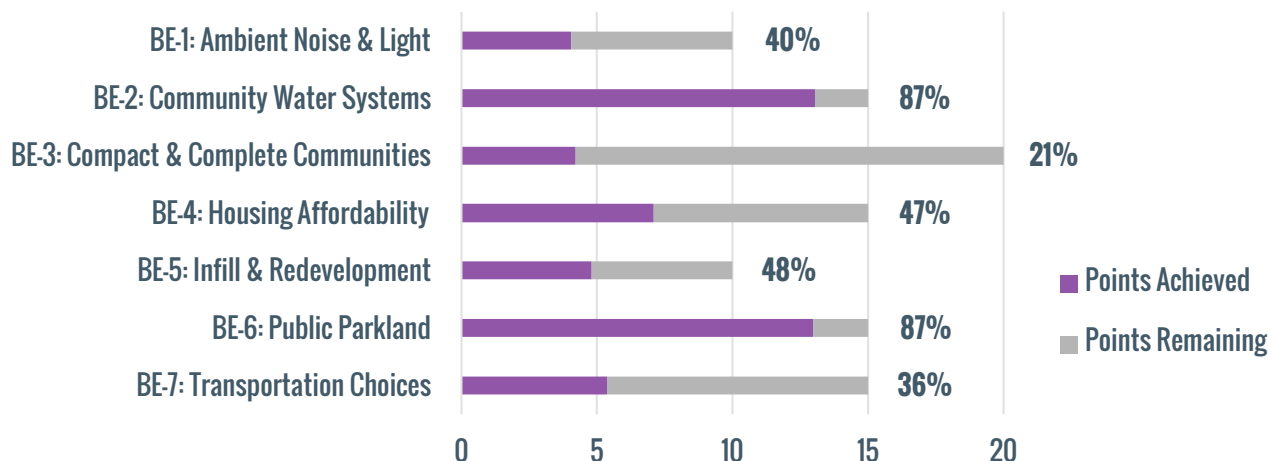
# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## Overview

The seven objectives in the Built Environment goal area evaluate community development patterns, livability, and design characteristics, with an emphasis on access and choice for all residents regardless of income.

OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE & INTENT	AVAILABLE POINTS
BE-1	<b>Ambient Noise &amp; Light:</b> Minimize and manage ambient noise and light levels to protect public health and the integrity of ecological systems	10
BE-2	<b>Community Water Systems:</b> Provide a clean and secure water supply for all local users through the management of potable water, wastewater, stormwater, and other piped infrastructure	15
BE-3	<b>Compact &amp; Complete Communities:</b> Concentrate development in compact, human-scaled, walkable centers and neighborhoods that connect to public transit, offer diverse uses and services, and provide housing options for families of all income levels	20
BE-4	<b>Housing Affordability:</b> Construct, preserve, and maintain an adequate and diverse supply of location-efficient and affordable housing options for all residents	15
BE-5	<b>Infill &amp; Redevelopment:</b> Focus growth and redevelopment in infill areas to reduce sprawl and ensure existing infrastructure that supports the community is in satisfactory working condition	10
BE-6	<b>Public Spaces:</b> Create a system of well-used and enjoyable public parkland that feature equitable, convenient access for residents	15
BE-7	<b>Transportation Choices:</b> Promote diverse transportation modes, including walking, bicycling, and public transit, that are safe, low-cost, and reduce vehicle miles traveled	15

Cedar Rapids achieved 51.5 out of the 100 total available points in this goal area, receiving 87% of the points for both BE-2: Community Water Systems and BE-6: Public Parkland. The objectives with the most points remaining are BE-3: Compact & Complete Communities and BE-7: Transportation Choices.



Graph 4: Cedar Rapids' Built Environment performance by objective.





## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### Objective Analysis

#### BE-1: AMBIENT NOISE & LIGHT

##### 4/10 points

BE-1 aims to minimize and manage ambient noise and light levels to protect public health and the integrity of ecological systems. The quantitative outcome measures that track progress in this objective include the measurement of daytime ambient noise, light glare/trespass, and darkness in the night sky. Cedar Rapids did not submit data for the outcomes.

Cedar Rapids received credit for four of the eleven available actions, with three focusing on ambient noise. Notably, since 2013, the *Secure and Friendly Environments in Cedar Rapids* program has addressed 2,153 noise violations through enforcement of Chapter 22A of the city code.

Moving forward, the City could consider starting to work on light pollution by adopting outdoor lighting guidelines or an ordinance, as 43 of the 73 certified STAR communities have done. This would set a foundation for other ambient light reduction efforts, such as a program to eliminate sources of light pollution coming from streetlights, parking facilities, and signage (18 of 73).

#### BE-2: COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS

##### 13/15 points

Full credit was received in two of four outcomes by demonstrating a secure water supply and safe stormwater management. Cedar Rapids did not receive credit in the other two outcomes, which ask a community to demonstrate no violations of EPA's drinking water rules across the community and compliance with wastewater management standards through Clean Water Act effluent and reporting guidelines. Cedar Rapids achieved six of the eleven available action measures.

These results indicate substantial, innovative improvements and upgrades have been made to the City's water infrastructure, many in response to devastating floods. The *Middle Cedar Partnership Project* and resilience improvements to water infrastructure are especially notable. An additional water system resilience effort that the City could implement is adopting protocols in the case of insufficient clean water supply to ensure the needs of low-income and other vulnerable populations are met, an action completed by 27 of 73 certified STAR communities.

Future efforts could focus on preparatory-type actions; for example, the City could develop a jurisdiction-wide management plan for drinking water supply, wastewater, and stormwater (44 of 73) or collaborate with a regional water management group (51 of 73).

#### BE-3: COMPACT & COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

##### 4.2/20 points

In this objective, STAR asks that communities identify a number of areas to analyze as compact and complete centers (defined as walkable ½ mile areas with a variety of uses, transit accessibility, and affordability). The number of compact & complete centers (CCCs) that a community must report on is based upon population; Cedar Rapids was required to report on four centers. The City met affordability requirements for one of four CCCs, the Downtown CCC, and received partial credit on two of three outcomes related to density, destinations, and transit availability, and urban design for that CCC. No credit was received for the walkability outcome.

Cedar Rapids achieved two of seven potential actions measures, both being preparatory-type. The City's comprehensive plan supports compact,





## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### Objective Analysis, continued

mixed-use development alongside the official future land use map. To further improve, the City could consider adopting regulatory strategies to permit or incentivize increased density, a step completed by 52 of 73 certified communities, or adopting advanced parking strategies in transit-served or mixed-use areas (29 of 73). Requiring build-to lines for commercial and residential structures in CCCs (37 of 73) can also help advance this objective's outcomes.

#### BE-4: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

##### 7.1/15 points

Cedar Rapids received credit for demonstrating affordable housing production exceeds 5% annually. The City showed an increase from 207 units in 2010 to 1,367 in 2017, an annual increase of 80%. The City did not submit for credit on housing and transportation costs or affordable rental housing preservation.

Cedar Rapids received credit for three of eight possible actions. The City provides assistance and incentives for affordable housing through the *Single Family New Construction Program* and the *Housing Fund for Linn County*. The *Affordable Housing Network, Inc. Financial Empowerment Program* further supports community housing efforts by offering free one-on-one financial guidance to assist and guide residents toward financial stability, homeownership, retirement and/or savings. It is important that the City takes steps to ensure affordable housing assistance and incentives continue beyond flood-recovery efforts.

These completed actions set a solid foundation for additional affordable housing programs, for example, one that preserves and maintains existing affordable rental housing, an action completed by five of ten communities certified under Version 2 of the rating system.

#### BE-5: INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT

##### 4.8/10 points

The City received partial credit for one of the two outcomes in BE-5, which asks communities to demonstrate an increase in the percentage of all development that occurs in infill and redevelopment areas. From 2014-2016, the City showed an increase from 21.5% to 23.4% in residential developments and 7.9% to 14% in non-residential developments. It is important for the City to monitor future development locations to ensure ongoing progress in infill and redevelopment. The City did not submit for the second outcome, which assesses the condition of existing public infrastructure.

Cedar Rapids received credit for four of the eleven actions in BE-5. Zoning overlay districts that encourage high quality infill, educational efforts around the importance of infill, and core district reinvestment all support infill in the City. Going forward, the City could consider developing an inventory of existing infrastructure conditions, a brownfields inventory (45 of 73), or temporary creative neighborhood uses for vacant city properties not currently in use (40 of 73).

#### BE-6: PUBLIC PARKLAND

##### 13/15 points

Cedar Rapids achieved three of four outcomes in Public Parkland, which assess acreage of parkland, connectivity to off-road trails, and use and satisfaction of public parks. The City has 24.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents (above the STAR threshold of 20.3), 99.9% of residents are within 3 miles of an off-road trail, and 82% used a recreation facility, such as a park, at least once in the past year. The City did not submit for the outcome that addresses proximity to parkland.





## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### Objective Analysis, continued

Cedar Rapids achieved six of ten available action measures. Another measure was submitted but denied, as the City did not meet the STAR threshold for the amount of funding per capita dedicated to parks.

Given the substantial amount of parkland in the community, future efforts may seek to focus upon preserving, maintaining, and connecting residents to that parkland. For example, 27 of the 73 certified communities have developed site design guidelines for improvements to existing facilities that can help strengthen environmental benefits and visitor amenities, and 40 have implemented regulatory strategies or development incentives that maintain and connect public parkland. Finally, conducting a study regarding the economic impact of public parklands on the local economy can also help promote continued excellence (20 of 73).

The City could consider implementing some of the seven remaining actions in BE-7, such as developing local government employee incentives for alternative commutes, an action done by over half of certified communities. Other options include creating a communitywide public bike share program that is accessible to the entire community (18 of 73), or adoption of subdivision or other regulations that require walkability and safety (36 of 73).

## BE-7: TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

### 5.4/20 points

Cedar Rapids received credit in one outcome by demonstrating low bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular transportation fatalities. The City did not submit data on transportation mode split, transportation affordability, or vehicle miles traveled.

The City received credit in four of eleven action measures. Most notably, the City added 17.5 miles of on- and off-road bike paths between 2015 and 2017, an increase of 37% since 2014. A *Comprehensive Trails Plan*, *Complete Streets Policy*, and requirements for trail easements support continued progress in this objective.

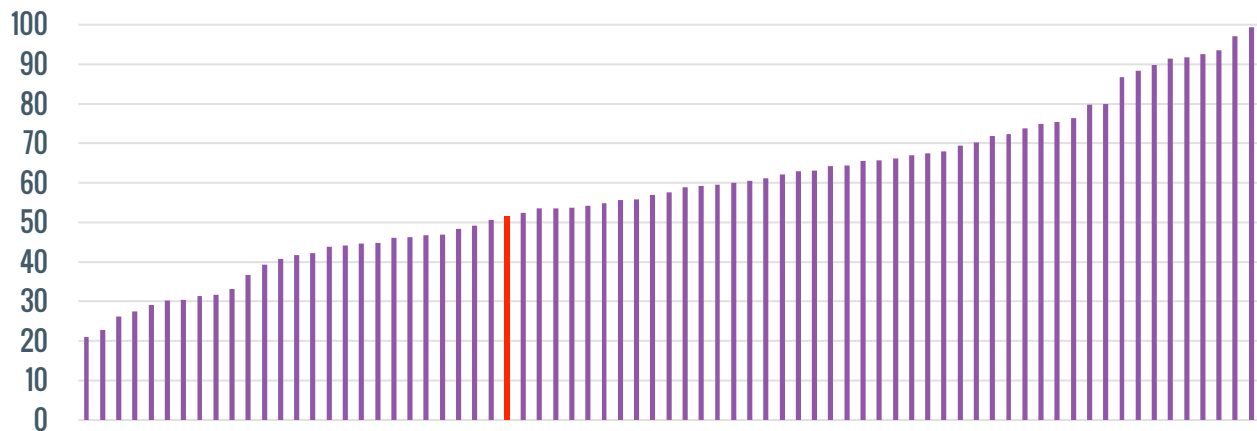




## BUILT ENVIRONMENT Comparative Analysis

The graph below shows how Cedar Rapids' Built Environment total score compares to other certified communities. The City falls between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 73 STAR-certified communities. Relative to other communities, Cedar Rapids received well below median scores in BE-3: Compact & Complete Communities and BE-7: Transportation Choices, near median scores in BE-1: Ambient Noise & Light, BE-2: Community Water Systems, BE-5: Infill & Redevelopment, and BE-6: Public Parkland, and an above median score in BE-4: Housing Affordability.

Across all objectives in this goal area, the City achieved 43% of available outcomes and 43% of available actions. The City's highest achievement outcomes relative to other communities come from parkland acreage in BE-6 and the production of affordable housing in BE-4. BE-3: Compact & Complete Communities and BE-7: Transportation Choices may be good areas to coordinate future efforts, as these two objectives are closely connected.

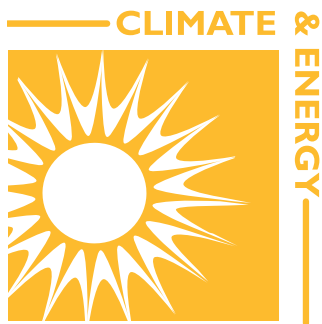


Graph 5: Cedar Rapids' Built Environment total score in red, as compared to all certified STAR communities.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- 80% annual increase in affordable housing production from 2010-2017
- 24.89 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents
- 82% of residents reported using recreation facilities in the past year
- Increased percentage of infill development from 21.53% to 23.42% in residential and 7.99% to 14.04% in non-residential from 2014-2016
- Flood Recovery efforts like the Single Family New Construction Program and waste water treatment plant upgrades





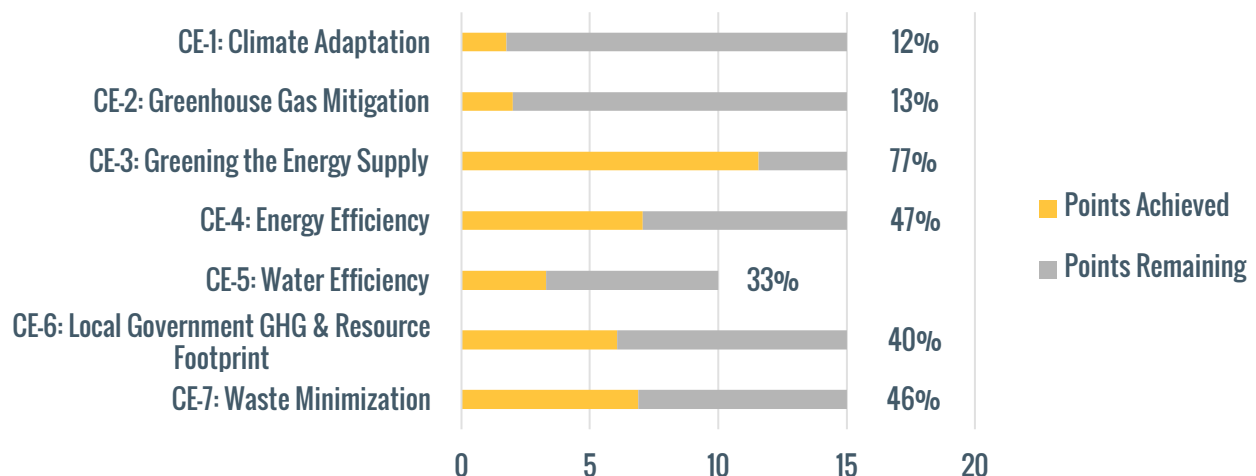
# CLIMATE & ENERGY

## Overview

The seven objectives in STAR's Climate & Energy goal area aim to reduce climate impacts and increase resource efficiency in order to create safer and healthier communities.

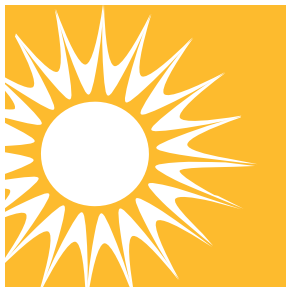
OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE & INTENT	AVAILABLE POINTS
CE-1	<b>Climate Adaptation:</b> Strengthen the resilience of communities to climate change impacts on built, natural, economic, health, and social systems	15
CE-2	<b>Greenhouse Gas Mitigation:</b> Achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions throughout the community	15
CE-3	<b>Greening the Energy Supply:</b> Transition the local energy supply for both transportation and non-mobile sources toward the use of renewable, less carbon-intensive, and less toxic alternatives	15
CE-4	<b>Energy Efficiency:</b> Minimize energy use and demand in the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors as a means to increase energy efficiency in the community	15
CE-5	<b>Water Efficiency:</b> Minimize water use and demand as a means to conserve water	10
CE-6	<b>Local Government GHG &amp; Resource Footprint:</b> Lead by example by reducing local government greenhouse gas emissions and minimizing energy and water use in local government facilities and specified local infrastructure	15
CE-7	<b>Waste Minimization:</b> Reduce and reuse material waste produced in the community	15

Climate & Energy was Cedar Rapids' lowest scoring goal area, with achievement of 38.6 out of the 100 total available points. The City scored highest in CE-3: Greening the Energy Supply and CE-4: Energy Efficiency. The objectives with the most room for improvement are CE-1: Climate Adaptation and CE-2: Greenhouse Gas Mitigation.



Graph 6: Cedar Rapids' Climate & Energy performance by objective.





# CLIMATE & ENERGY

## Objective Analysis

### CE-1: CLIMATE ADAPTATION

#### 1.75/15 points

The City of Cedar Rapids was unable to demonstrate a reduction in locally identified vulnerabilities or increased resiliency to communitywide risks, and thus did not receive credit in this objective's one outcome. The City did receive credit for one of ten actions, for a stormwater cost-share program that helps to increase adoption of green infrastructure, which in turn improves resilience.

To improve in this objective, the City could begin measuring and tracking vulnerability or resiliency metrics to start to explore existing conditions. Of the 73 certified communities, 23 have put in place educational programming pertaining to climate adaptation. Cedar Rapids could also consider developing or participating in an interdisciplinary, regional committee for the purpose of better understanding and addressing shared vulnerabilities (34 of 73). In addition to these preparatory actions, the City could take a planning approach and prepare and adopt a climate adaptation plan (19 of 73).

### CE-2: GREENHOUSE GAS MITIGATION

#### 2.0/20 points

Cedar Rapids did not receive credit in the single outcome for this objective, which measures trends in communitywide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The one credited action came from the City's *Solar Group Buy*, which provided an opportunity for city residents to install solar at discounted prices, and also resulted in streamlined solar permitting, inspection, and zoning processes.

Important next steps to advance this objective could include conducting a GHG emissions

inventory, or developing a climate action plan, like 39 certified communities have done. An educational campaign relating to GHG emissions reductions (27 of 73) could also be paired with a climate adaptation education campaign.

### CE-3: GREENING THE ENERGY SUPPLY

#### 11.6/15 points

Cedar Rapids received credit for both outcomes in CE-3 by demonstrating that 2.14 electric vehicle-charging stations are available per 10,000 residents and that 20% of the local energy supply comes from renewable sources. Credit was also received for five of the ten available actions. The City has achieved the *SolSmart gold designation* for its efforts to streamline processes for residents and businesses to pursue solar energy, and six electric vehicle-charging stations have been installed in the past five years.

Future improvements could center around the adoption of a plan to drive additional shifts to alternative fuels and renewable energy sources, a step completed by 29 certified communities.

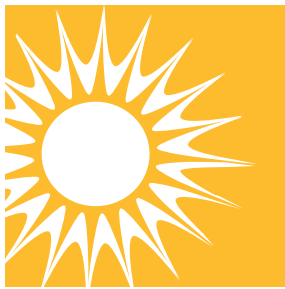
### CE-4: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

#### 7.1/15 points

This objective focuses on minimizing energy use and demand in the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors as a means of increasing energy efficiency in the community. Cedar Rapids received credit for one of the two outcomes, which looks at heat island mitigation, but did not receive credit for the energy use reduction outcome. Credit was received for three of eleven actions, all of which were implementation-type actions.







## CLIMATE & ENERGY

### Objective Analysis, continued

In the actions, Cedar Rapids received credit for *LEED construction* incentives, *Alliant Energy* energy efficiency programs, *Green Iowa AmeriCorps* programming, and the *Hawkeye Area Community Action Program* weatherization program, all of which contribute to greater energy efficiency in the community.

Efforts to improve results in the objective may include more preparatory efforts, such as a strategic action plan to improve energy efficiency in residential, commercial, and industrial buildings across the community (25 of 73), upgraded building codes (51 of 73), or an energy use information disclosure ordinance (8 of 73). Energy efficiency education efforts (48 of 73) could also round out a comprehensive climate change educational campaign.

#### CE-5: WATER EFFICIENCY

##### 3.3/10 points

This objective focuses on minimizing water use and demand as a means to conserve water in the community. While Cedar Rapids did not receive credit for the outcome in this objective, which looks at water use per capita, the City received credit for two of the eight available actions. The City's utility department offers high efficiency toilet and rain sensor rebates as part of the City's *Water Wise program*, which also includes educational programming and implements water efficiency measures in city-owned facilities.

The most commonly implemented STAR actions that help improve community water efficiency include working with local utilities to increase the use of smart water meters and the adoption of a communitywide water management plan to improve efficiency. Cedar Rapids could consider implementing similar actions.

#### CE-6: LOCAL GOVERNMENT GHG & RESOURCE FOOTPRINT

##### 6.1/15 points

CE-6 looks specifically at local government GHG emissions and energy and water footprints. The City received no credit for the three outcomes but achieved five of eleven actions.

Notably, benchmarking data is published on the City's website and includes solar, electric, and natural gas data collected for all city-owned buildings over 10,000 square feet. Water use data is also collected for water and wastewater treatment plants. The City has also increased the use of sub-metering at the water and wastewater treatment plants and replaced nearly 3,000 streetlights with LEDs.

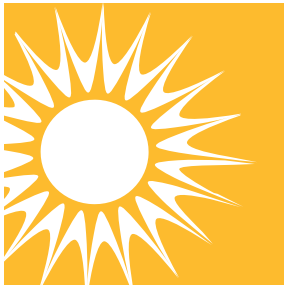
A government GHG inventory and a policy to ensure government energy supplies come from renewable energy sources are potential next steps for Cedar Rapids.

#### CE-7: WASTE MINIMIZATION

##### 6.9/15 points

Cedar Rapids received no credit for the outcomes measuring total solid waste and recycling rates, but did receive credit for five of nine actions. Future efforts to minimize waste may seek to begin tracking recycling and total solid waste data to understand the primary drivers of total solid waste and recycling rates in the community. This data could then support the development and adoption of a waste management plan for the jurisdiction, a commonly achieved action in 42 of 73 certified communities.

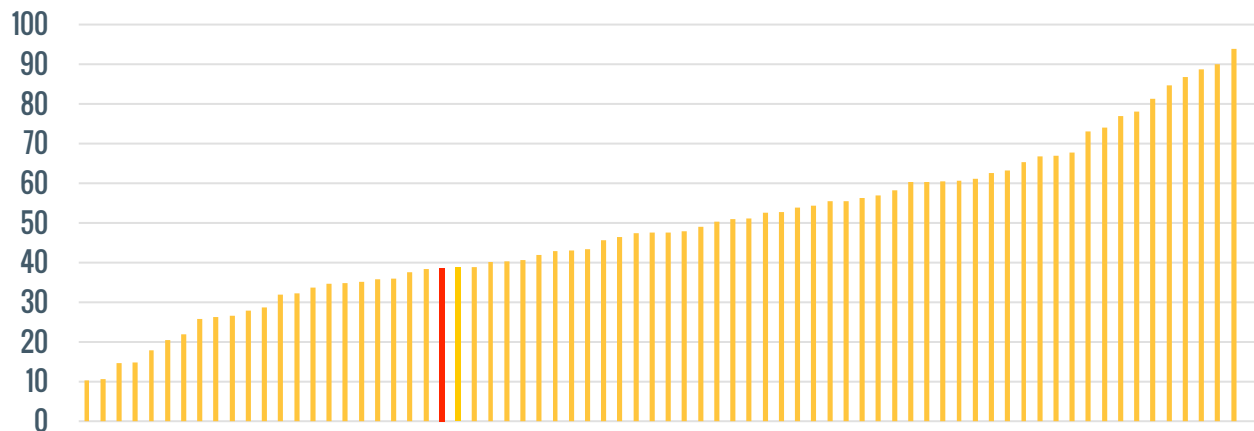




## CLIMATE & ENERGY Comparative Analysis

The graph below shows how Cedar Rapids' Climate & Energy total score compares to other certified communities. The City generally falls near the bottom of the second 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for all 73 STAR-certified communities. Relative to other communities, Cedar Rapids received a far below median score in CE-2: Greenhouse Gas Mitigation, and below median scores in CE-1: Climate Adaptation and CE-7: Waste Minimization. The CE-3: Greening the Energy Supply score was above median. Comparisons are limited in CE-4: Energy Efficiency, CE-5: Water Efficiency, and CE-6: Local Government GHG & Resource Efficiency because they are newly formed objectives in V2.0 of the STAR rating system.

The City submitted limited data for the outcome measures in the Climate & Energy objectives relative to other communities, except for in CE-3 and CE-4. 25% of outcomes and 32% of actions across the objectives received credit. Many of the actions that received credit were implementation actions, as opposed to preparatory actions. Opportunities for improvement include focusing on the communitywide climate change-focused objectives, namely CE-1 and CE-2. Educational and planning efforts could be good places to work across objectives and could be completed in a cohesive, cross-objective manner. Given the number of implementation actions already in place, there is substantial opportunity for educational and planning efforts to highlight and build upon existing successes.



Graph 7: Cedar Rapids' Climate & Energy total score in red, as compared to all certified STAR communities.

### CLIMATE & ENERGY HIGHLIGHTS:

- 20% of the local energy supply comes from renewable sources
- 98.3% of residents benefit from living a reasonable distance from heat island mitigation features
- Local government benchmarks energy and water use and publishes data and results online





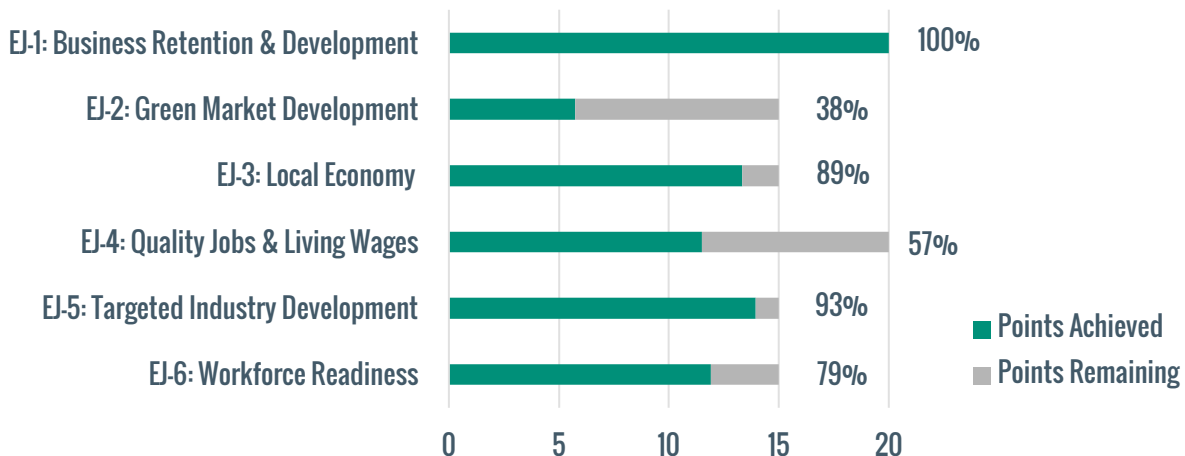
# ECONOMY & JOBS

## Overview

The six objectives of STAR's Economy & Jobs goal area work together to promote equitably shared prosperity and access to quality jobs.

OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE & INTENT	AVAILABLE POINTS
EJ-1	<b>Business Retention &amp; Development:</b> Foster equitable economic prosperity and stability by retaining and expanding businesses in all neighborhoods with support from the business community	20
EJ-2	<b>Green Market Development:</b> Increase overall market demand for products and services that protect the environment	15
EJ-3	<b>Local Economy:</b> Create an increasingly self-reliant community through a robust local economy that strongly supports small independent businesses	15
EJ-4	<b>Quality Jobs &amp; Living Wages:</b> Expand job opportunities that support upward economic mobility, offer supportive workplace policies, and pay living wages so that all working people and their families can afford basic necessities without governmental assistance	20
EJ-5	<b>Targeted Industry Development:</b> Increase local competitiveness by strengthening clusters of businesses, suppliers, and associated institutions	15
EJ-6	<b>Workforce Readiness:</b> Prepare the workforce for successful employment through increasing attainment of post-secondary education and improving outcomes of workforce development programs	15

Economy & Jobs was Cedar Rapids' top performing goal area, with the City achieving 76.4 out of the available 100 points. The City received full credit in EJ-1: Business Retention & Development and also scored very well in EJ-3: Local Economy and EJ-5: Targeted Industry Development. The objectives with the most room for improvement are EJ-2: Green Market Development and EJ-4: Quality Jobs & Living Wages.



Graph 8: Cedar Rapids' Economy & Jobs performance by objective.





## ECONOMY & JOBS

### Objective Analysis

#### EJ-1: BUSINESS RETENTION & DEVELOPMENT

##### 20/20 points

Cedar Rapids received full credit for this objective, including at least partial credit for all three outcomes and all eight actions. The City received full outcome credit for demonstrating consistent increases in the number of county businesses and showing that employment statistics exceed national averages. Partial credit was received for the equitable employment outcome, as African American residents constitute 5.3% of the City's population but 6.8%-12.3% of the unemployed population.

Several of the actions submitted in this objective build upon regional collaboration. For example, the *Cedar Rapids Metropolitan Economic Alliance* fosters public-private partnerships and addresses workforce development and business attraction challenges. The City also utilizes self-supporting municipal improvement districts in the *Downtown*, *Czech Village/New Bohemia District*, and *Medical Quarter* to support economic development and growth.

#### EJ-2: GREEN MARKET DEVELOPMENT

##### 5.7/15 points

This objective focuses on increasing market demand for products and services that protect the environment. Outcomes focus on GHG intensity, green building stock, and green power. Cedar Rapids did not receive credit for the outcomes, but did receive credit for five of nine actions. Credited efforts include *Sustainable City Talks*, “pay-as-you-throw” pricing for municipal solid waste, and sustainable purchasing principles.

Future efforts could include amending local economic plans to focus on green jobs and

technology (as done in 23 of the 73 certified communities) and partnering with regional entities to articulate an overarching vision for sustainable economic development (19 of 73).

#### EJ-3: LOCAL ECONOMY

##### 13.3/15 points

The City of Cedar Rapids performed well in this objective, which seeks to create an increasingly self-reliant community through a robust local economy that supports small and independent businesses. The City achieved full credit in two of the three outcomes for demonstrating that 62% of import sectors have increasing location quotients and an 11.2% 3-year increase in total funds deposited in locally owned and operated financial institutions. No credit was received for demonstrating at least 20 small businesses per 1,000 residents in the community.

Cedar Rapids also received credit for six of nine action measures. Efforts build upon the *Cedar Rapids Strategic Action Plan*, the City's comprehensive economic development strategy, which includes assessment of economic leakage and specific industry sectors. The Cedar Rapids *MICRO loan* and the *Downtown Dine Dwell Do* campaign both support local businesses.

Additional efforts could include the adoption of an economic localization plan, a challenging but rewarding action completed by 9 of 73 certified communities. This plan could include strategies to capitalize on opportunities for increasing local ownership, meeting local demand for goods and services, and resource sharing for small businesses. Data for the third outcome could also be tracked and included for this plan.





# ECONOMY & JOBS

## Objective Analysis, continued

### EJ-4: QUALITY JOBS & LIVING WAGES

#### 11.5/20 points

This objective aims to expand job opportunities that support upward economic mobility, offer supportive workplace policies, and pay living wages so that all working people and their families can afford basic necessities without governmental assistance. Cedar Rapids received credit for showing that at least 80% of households meet a local living wage standard, but was not able to show increasing median household incomes or decreasing income inequality locally and regionally.

Cedar Rapids received credit in four of ten available actions. Notable examples include supporting the *Corridor Business Journal's* *Cooldest Places to Work* campaign and participation in the *Center for Working Families* initiative that helps low-income families increase their earnings.

Challenging but effective next steps could include promoting project labor agreements, community benefit agreements, and local hiring agreements (13 of 73) and providing training programs and assistance to businesses to encourage them to provide family-friendly workplace policies and extended benefits (7 of 73).

### EJ-5: TARGETED INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

#### 13.9/15 points

In this objective, the community must select three targeted industries on which to report. Cedar Rapids identified the following targeted industries: *Finance and Insurance*, *Health Care and Social Assistance*, and *Food and Bioprocessing*. All three industries showed an increase in both the number of businesses and total employment.

The City also achieved seven of the eight available actions. The *ISU-Cedar Rapids Food Manufacturing*

and *Bioprocessing Partnership*, a public-private initiative, helps to facilitate business-to-business networking and information exchange in related industries across the community. The only unachieved action in EJ-5 was providing direct financial assistance to attract, retain, or expand businesses in target industry sectors, an action implemented by 24 of 73 certified communities.

### EJ-6: WORKFORCE READINESS

#### 11.9/15 points

This objective focuses on preparing the workforce for successful employment through increasing attainment of post-secondary education and successful local workforce development programs. The City of Cedar Rapids received partial credit for one outcome by showing a steady increase over time in residents that have earned a post-secondary degree, from 39.9% in 2010 to 42% in 2015. The City did not receive credit in the second outcome, which measures improvements in workforce training outcomes.

Cedar Rapids received credit for six of nine available actions, including for the *PACE* and *GAP* Iowa workforce legislation implemented by Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids. These programs provide supportive services including transportation, childcare, and housing assistance; pathway navigation case management; and financial counseling.

The unachieved actions for this objective include requiring local government contractors to prioritize hiring local residents (17 of 73), creating data-sharing agreements to support workforce development planning (15 of 73), and producing annual reports that track workforce readiness performance measures (17 of 73).



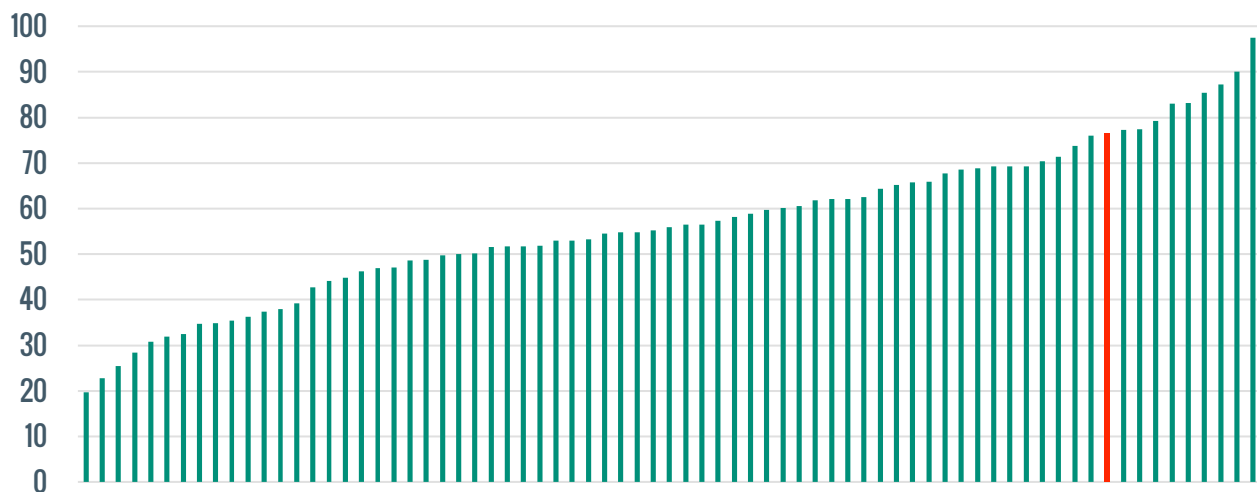


## ECONOMY & JOBS

### Comparative Analysis

The graph below shows how Cedar Rapids' Economy & Jobs total score compares to other certified communities. Cedar Rapids' total score falls above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for all 73 certified communities. Scores in this goal area were high in almost all objectives except for EJ-2: Green Market Development, the one objective in which Cedar Rapids received a below median score relative to other communities. All other Economy & Jobs objectives received above median scores.

Overall, the City performed fairly well in the outcome measures across objectives, receiving some outcome credit in all objectives except EJ-2, and obtaining credit in 53% of available outcomes across all objectives. The City also achieved 68% of all available actions. While the City obtained a high score in this goal area, opportunities for improvement still exist, including expanded efforts in green market development and ensuring the economy is working for all residents. African-Americans are disproportionately unemployed in the community and income inequality is increasing both in the City and regionally. Equitable post-secondary attainment is unclear, as data is not readily available – assessing and tracking this data would be a valuable undertaking.



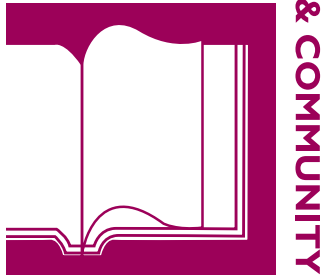
Graph 9: Cedar Rapids' Economy & Jobs total score in red, as compared to all certified STAR communities.

### ECONOMY & JOBS HIGHLIGHTS:

- 62.2% of import sectors have increasing location quotients over the past 3 years
- 11.23% increase in deposits in local financial institutions over past 3 years
- 42% of residents have a post-secondary degree in 2015, an increase from 39.9% in 2010
- Continued increases in job and business growth, both communitywide and in target industries



## EDUCATION, ARTS & COMMUNITY

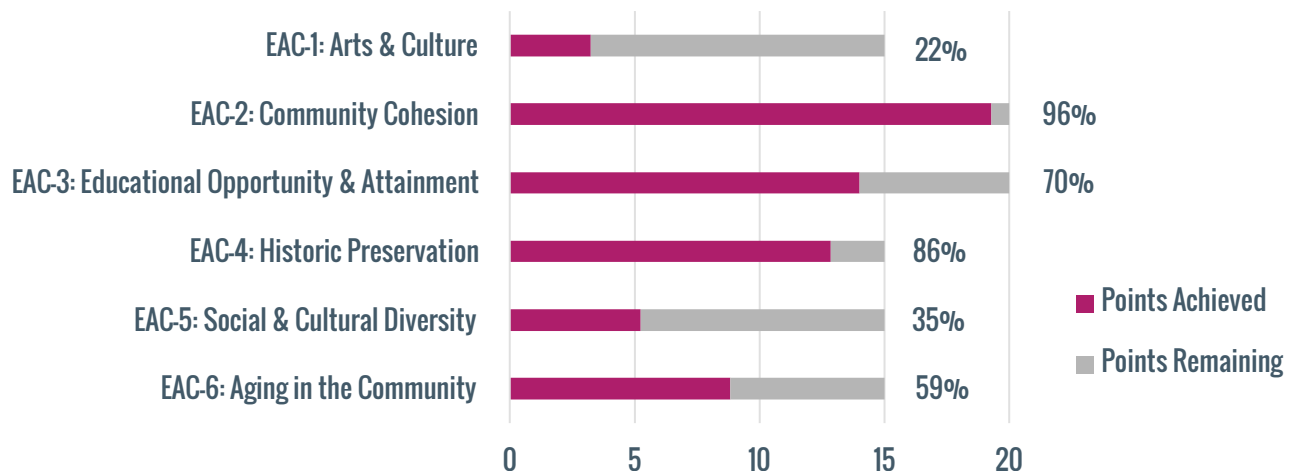


# EDUCATION, ARTS & COMMUNITY Overview

The five objectives of STAR's Education, Arts & Community goal area promote an educated, cohesive, and socially connected community.

OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE & INTENT	AVAILABLE POINTS
EAC-1	<b>Arts &amp; Culture:</b> Provide a broad range of arts and cultural resources and activities that encourage community member participation, creative self-expression, and community revitalization	15
EAC-2	<b>Community Cohesion:</b> Promote socially cohesive neighborhoods where residents are connected, have a sense of place, and feel committed to their community	20
EAC-3	<b>Educational Opportunity &amp; Attainment:</b> Achieve equitable attainment of a quality education for individuals from birth to adulthood	20
EAC-4	<b>Historic Preservation:</b> Preserve and reuse historic structures and sites to retain local, regional, and national history and heritage, and reinforce community character	15
EAC-5	<b>Social &amp; Cultural Diversity:</b> Celebrate, respect, and represent the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of the community and its members	15
EAC-6	<b>Aging in the Community:</b> Encourage active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age	15

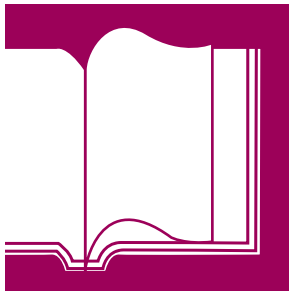
Cedar Rapids achieved 63.4 out of the 100 possible points in Education, Arts & Community. The City performed the best in EAC-2: Community Cohesion, achieving 96% of the available points. Cedar Rapids received 21.5% of the points in EAC-1: Arts & Culture and 35% of available points in EAC-5: Social & Cultural Diversity; these two objectives have the greatest opportunity for improvement.



Graph 10: Cedar Rapids' Education, Arts & Community performance by objective.







## EDUCATION, ARTS & COMMUNITY

### Objective Analysis

#### EAC-1: ARTS & CULTURE

##### 3.2/15 points

Cedar Rapids did not receive credit in the outcomes, which ask applicants to demonstrate that 5% of the businesses in the community are in the creative industries, 30% of adults attend a live performing arts event annually, and 20% of adults visit an art museum annually.

The City did receive credit for four of the eleven available actions by demonstrating dedicated funding for the arts through the *Visual Arts Enhancement Program*, support of the *Visual Arts Commission*, and use of hotel-motel tax monies to support civic organizations that focus on the outdoors, theater, history, and entertainment.

Additional steps in this objective could include the adoption of a strategic plan to guide ongoing arts and cultural endeavors (an action done by 45 of 73 certified communities) and supporting the local arts community by hiring local artists to create artwork and sculptures, or to perform in public spaces (as done by 52 certified communities).

#### EAC-2: COMMUNITY COHESION

##### 19.3/20 points

This objective aims to promote socially cohesive neighborhoods where residents are connected, have a sense of place, and feel committed to their community. Cedar Rapids received credit for demonstrating that 82% of residents live within one mile of a community venue and 37.6% of residents have volunteered in the past year. No credit was received for demonstrating that at least 80% of residents report positive levels of neighborhood cohesion through a community-wide survey.

The City also received credit for ten of eleven action measures. Highlights include conducting the *National Citizen Survey* and the *Cedar Rapids Community Livability Report* to gather community perceptions, and the *Neighborhood Service Delivery Initiative*, which provides certified neighborhoods \$10,000 to support neighborhood work plans. Additionally, the *Leadership for Five Seasons Youth Program* provides high school students with eight days of in-depth programming to acquaint them with community needs, opportunities, problems, and resources.

The single action left on the table is the adoption of neighborhood plans for a majority of the neighborhoods in the community. This is a challenging action, but was completed by 29 of 73 certified communities.

#### EAC-3: EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY & ATTAINMENT

##### 14.0/20 points

Cedar Rapids received no credit for the outcomes, which look at graduation rates and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency, both communitywide and distributed across subgroups, but did receive credit for all nine of the action measures.

Future efforts could include the tracking and publishing of the outcome measure data for this objective to promote transparency and accountability of existing programming. In addition, intentionally tracking the equity outcomes and assessing existing programming through an equity lens can help to ensure the education system is working for all students.





## EDUCATION, ARTS & COMMUNITY

### Objective Analysis, continued

#### EAC-4: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

##### 12.9/10 points

Cedar Rapids received credit for all three outcomes, specifically for the *2nd & 3rd Avenue Historic District* and *Redmond Park-Grande Avenue Historic District*, for demonstrating ongoing increases in the number of preserved structures and sites, and for showing that historic preservation efforts have had a positive impact on the local economy.

The City received credit for four of the nine available actions, including the City's *Historic Sites and Districts Identification System*, an online tool that allows city staff and the public easy access to information about local historic resources.

Future efforts could include expanding the reach and impact of local historic preservation efforts by collaborating with local entities to support events, recognition programs, and tourism efforts, a step completed by 51 of 73 certified communities. Alternatively, the City could consider providing financial assistance to low-income homeowners, renters, seniors, and/or businesses vulnerable to rising real estate values to defray the costs of maintenance associated with historic preservation (25 of 73).

#### EAC-5: SOCIAL & CULTURAL DIVERSITY

##### 5.3/15 points

The City of Cedar Rapids received no credit for the outcomes, which seek to demonstrate diverse local government hiring and that public events celebrating social and cultural diversity are regularly held in the community. Five of eight actions were achieved.

Credit was received for the *City Government Employment Demographic* chart and workplace diversity survey and for the *Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Legacy Series*, which supports events relating to various social/cultural groups.

An important next step in this objective could be to conduct robust diversity and cultural competence training for local government staff to expand awareness and understanding of the community's existing social or racial diversity (done by 44 of 73 communities).

#### EAC-6: AGING IN THE COMMUNITY

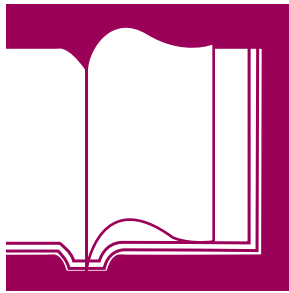
##### 8.8/15 points

EAC-6: Aging in the Community is a new objective under V2.0 of the STAR rating system. In this new objective, STAR encourages active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

The City of Cedar Rapids received full credit for showing that 72% of respondents over 55 answered positively to the National Citizen Survey Question regarding overall quality of life in Cedar Rapids. Full credit was also obtained by demonstrating that the City is overcoming challenges to aging independently. The City did not submit data on the Livability Index or Best Cities for Successful Aging ranking. Two of eleven actions were achieved.

Future opportunities include adopting a plan to identify priority service needs and resources to address the current and future needs of older residents, and allocating staff time to focus on planning and programming for a maturing population.



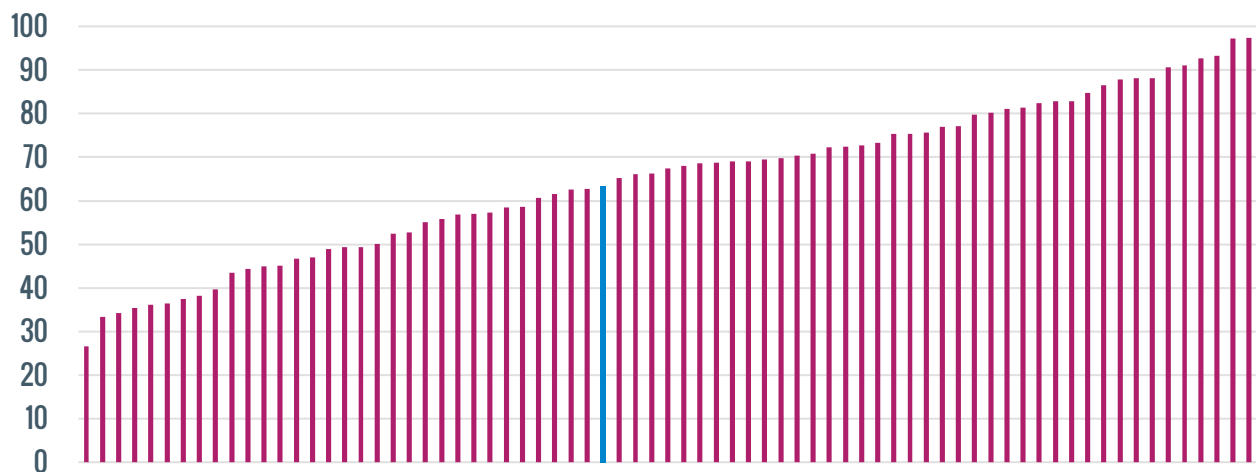


## EDUCATION, ARTS & COMMUNITY

### Comparative Analysis

The graph below shows how Cedar Rapids' Education, Arts & Community total score compares to those from other certified communities. The City fell just below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 73 certified communities. Relative to other communities, Cedar Rapids received a below median score in EAC-1: Arts & Culture, near median scores in EAC-3: Educational Opportunity & Attainment and EAC-5: Social & Cultural Diversity, and above median scores in EAC-4: Historic Preservation and EAC-2: Community Cohesion. EAC-6: Aging in the Community is a new objective in Version 2.0 of the STAR rating system, so comparisons are not possible at this time. Cedar Rapids' objective with the highest potential for improvement is EAC-1: Arts & Culture.

The City performed well in the outcomes for EAC-2, EAC-4, and EAC-6 and received points in 41% of available outcomes across all objectives. 58% of all available actions were also completed. EAC-1 was a low performing objective, both overall and relative to other communities, and is an area for improvement. EAC-3 is an objective that likely needs deeper analysis, as all actions were completed but no outcomes were achieved. Are there programs or policies that need modification or expansion? Is data a challenge in that objective? How can an equity lens be applied to existing programming?



Graph 11: Cedar Rapids' Education, Arts & Community total score in blue, as compared to all certified STAR communities. Note that communities certified under VI.x were normalized to 100 available points

### EDUCATION, ARTS & COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS:

- 37.6% volunteer rate across the community
- Neighborhood Service Delivery Initiative provides \$10,000 to certified neighborhoods to support local work plans
- 72% of seniors respond positively to question of overall quality of life in Cedar Rapids





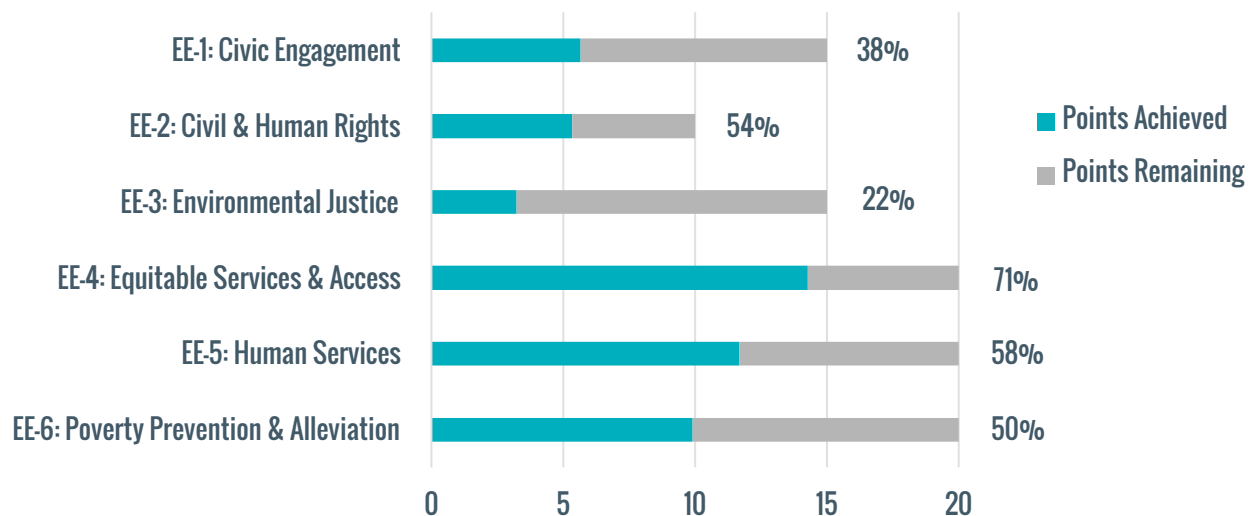
# EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT

## Overview

The six objectives in STAR's Equity & Empowerment goal area promote equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity for all residents.

OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE & INTENT	AVAILABLE POINTS
EE-1	<b>Civic Engagement:</b> Facilitate inclusive civic engagement through the empowerment of all community members to participate in local decision-making	15
EE-2	<b>Civil &amp; Human Rights:</b> Respect, promote, and fulfill the civil and human rights of all members of the community	10
EE-3	<b>Environmental Justice:</b> Ensure no neighborhoods or populations are overburdened by environmental pollution	15
EE-4	<b>Equitable Services &amp; Access:</b> Establish equitable spatial access to foundational community assets within and between neighborhoods and populations	20
EE-5	<b>Human Services:</b> Ensure that essential human services are readily available for the most vulnerable community members to ensure all residents receive supportive services when needed	20
EE-6	<b>Poverty Prevention &amp; Alleviation:</b> Alleviate the impacts of poverty, prevent people from falling into poverty, and proactively enable those who are living in poverty to obtain greater, lasting economic stability and security	20

Cedar Rapids achieved 50.1 out of 100 points in the Equity & Empowerment goal area. The City achieved 71.4% of the points in EE-4: Equitable Services & Access, the City's highest performing objective within this goal area. The objectives with the greatest room for improvement are EE-3: Environmental Justice and EE-1: Civic Engagement.



Graph 12: Cedar Rapids' Equity & Empowerment performance by objective.





# EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT

## Objective Analysis

### EE-1: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

#### 5.7/15 points

This objective seeks to facilitate inclusive civic engagement through the empowerment of all community members to participate in local decision-making. Cedar Rapids did not receive credit for the outcomes, which assess voter turnout rates, sense of individual empowerment, and whether appointments to local boards and commissions reflect the gender, racial, and ethnic diversity of the community.

Achievement of five of the ten available actions demonstrates a solid foundation for local civic engagement, through efforts like the *Neighborhood Service Delivery Initiative* and the *Leadership for Five Seasons* program. Future efforts could include:

- Adopting a policy to encourage diversity in local government appointments to boards and commissions (as done by 12 of 73 certified communities),
- Adopting inclusive public engagement guidelines (16 of 73), and
- Providing training on the adopted public engagement guidelines (22 of 73).

### EE-2: CIVIL & HUMAN RIGHTS

#### 5.4/10 points

Cedar Rapids did not receive credit for the outcome in EE-2, which looks at the resolution of both police-related and non-police-related civil and human rights complaints.

Cedar Rapids received credit for eight of the nine actions. The remaining action is to operationalize the local government's civil and human rights policies in programs, services, and operations. This action calls for civil/human rights considerations to be taken beyond a policy statement and included

in decision-making and programming across the local government, a step completed by 20 of 73 certified communities. For example, the City could use a racial equity toolkit or lens to review and improve existing programs and services.

The submittal also notes that the police department does not keep track of the timeliness of complaint investigations. The City could consider adopting a policy to address this in order to improve transparency and data accessibility. This data, in addition to results from the discussion on the perceptions of disparities in the school-based system of punishing youth (Action 1), could be included in inclusive public engagement efforts for EE-1: Civic Engagement.

### EE-3: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

#### 3.2/15 points

EE-3 asks communities to first identify priority environmental justice conditions and priority neighborhoods for evaluation, and then demonstrate progress in reducing risks and exposure to environmental justice conditions in those priority neighborhoods. The City of Cedar Rapids did not receive credit in the preliminary step or outcome, but did receive credit for one of the nine available action measures.

There are several actions the City could take to improve in this objective. Good first steps would be to conduct a comprehensive environmental justice assessment and then adopt an environmental justice or social equity plan with specific strategies to reduce identified negative impacts and conditions. In addition, the City could engage residents and stakeholders to create an Environmental Justice Collaborative Group to spearhead discussion and action in this topic area.





# EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT

## Objective Analysis, continued

### EE-4: EQUITABLE SERVICES & ACCESS

#### 14.3/20 points

The intent of EE-4 is to demonstrate that all populations and neighborhoods have equitable access to vital services and community assets. The City identified the 21% of neighborhoods with the highest concentration of low-income or minority residents as the priority for assessment. Cedar Rapids received full credit in the outcome by demonstrating equitable access to public spaces, public transit, public libraries, and public schools within these areas. Additional analysis of other priority community assets, like digital access or healthful food, could be undertaken to identify any areas of disparity. A more granular analysis of priority neighborhoods could also be performed to provide more in-depth context.

The City also received credit for one action, for the *Cedar Rapids Employee Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Team*. Future efforts in this objective could be run in tandem with efforts relating to EE-3. Specifically, the community could conduct an equity assessment parallel to an environmental justice assessment, and adopt an equity plan that also incorporates environmental justice conditions.

### EE-5: HUMAN SERVICES

#### 11.7/20 points

Cedar Rapids did not submit data for the outcome measures, which require communities to demonstrate adequate homelessness service provision, timely provision of mental health and substance abuse services, and timely resolution of all child and adult/elderly abuse and neglect complaints.

Cedar Rapids received credit for seven of nine actions. Notably, the City's human service

programming benefits from recent county-level improvements to the way the community documents, sends, and receives client referrals through the use of the *TAVHealth/TAVConnect* technology platform. As a result, new data is now being captured that will be used for annual reports, grant applications, and identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement.

An additional step in this objective would be to conduct a comprehensive community needs assessment (an action done by 34 of 73 certified communities) and then include results in a human services plan designed to guarantee that basic human needs are met (25 of 73).

### EE-6: POVERTY PREVENTION & ALLEVIATION

#### 9.9/20 points

Cedar Rapids did not submit data for the two outcome measures, which ask applicants to show a reduction in poverty over time in the broader community and then within certain priority population subgroups. However, the City did receive credit for five of the eight actions.

Actions being taken in Cedar Rapids are frequently supported by county services, including the *Linn County General Assistance Program*. The County also provides resource sheets for core services, including services for basic needs, affordable housing, family and youth services, older adults, health and dental care, employment, and transportation.

Future preparatory efforts to reduce poverty could include the creation of a team of local government staff to work collaboratively and coordinate with outside organizations (34 of 73), and the adoption of a communitywide plan to reduce poverty (16 of 73).



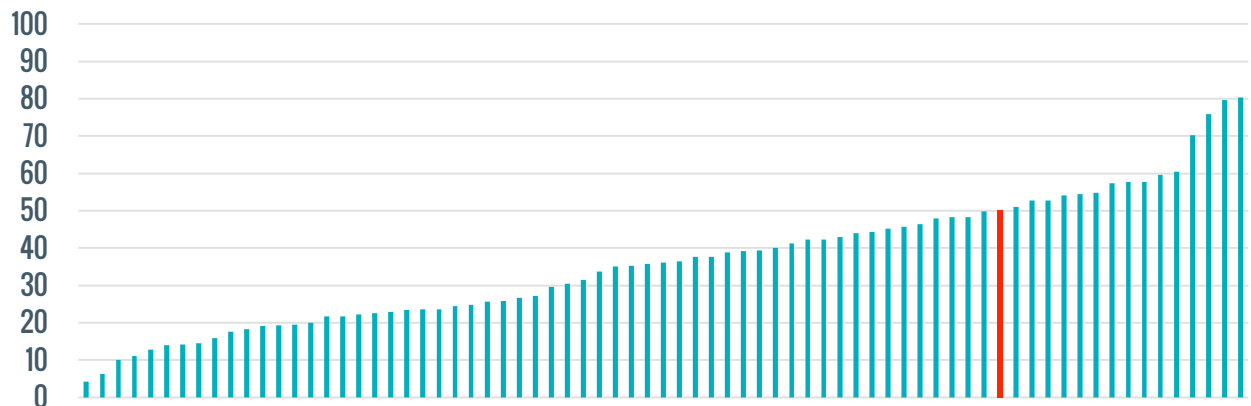


## EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT

### Comparative Analysis

The graph below shows Cedar Rapids' Equity & Empowerment total score compared to other certified communities. Cedar Rapids sits just above the 75th percentile in this challenging goal area. Relative to other communities, Cedar Rapids received below median points in EE-1: Civic Engagement, near median scores in EE-6: Poverty Prevention & Alleviation, EE-3: Environmental Justice, and EE-2: Civil & Human Rights, and above median scores in EE-5: Human Services. Scores in EE-4: Equitable Services & Access can't be readily compared given the substantial changes in Version 2.0 of the rating system.

Cedar Rapids received points in just one outcome in this goal area and in 48% of all available actions. In addition, many of the actions achieved were implementation actions, with fewer plans, policies, and partnerships achieved. Future efforts in this goal area may focus on these preparatory actions in order to set a solid foundation for continued success; many of these could be done in a parallel manner across objectives. Results also point to the need for standardized data and tracking processes to ensure outcome data is available for analysis. Improvements in EE-1 could be a good starting point, as efforts to improve equitable civic engagement should carry over into the other objectives within this goal area.



Graph 13: Cedar Rapids' Equity & Empowerment total score in red, as compared to all certified STAR communities.

### EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Access to public spaces, public transit, public schools, and public libraries are equal or higher for priority low-income or minority neighborhoods
- Five Seasons Stand Down annual event connects veterans to homelessness services
- The Creating Safe, Equitable, and Thriving Communities Taskforce convened to study youth demographics and relationship with their community, with a focus on minority youth and law enforcement relationships







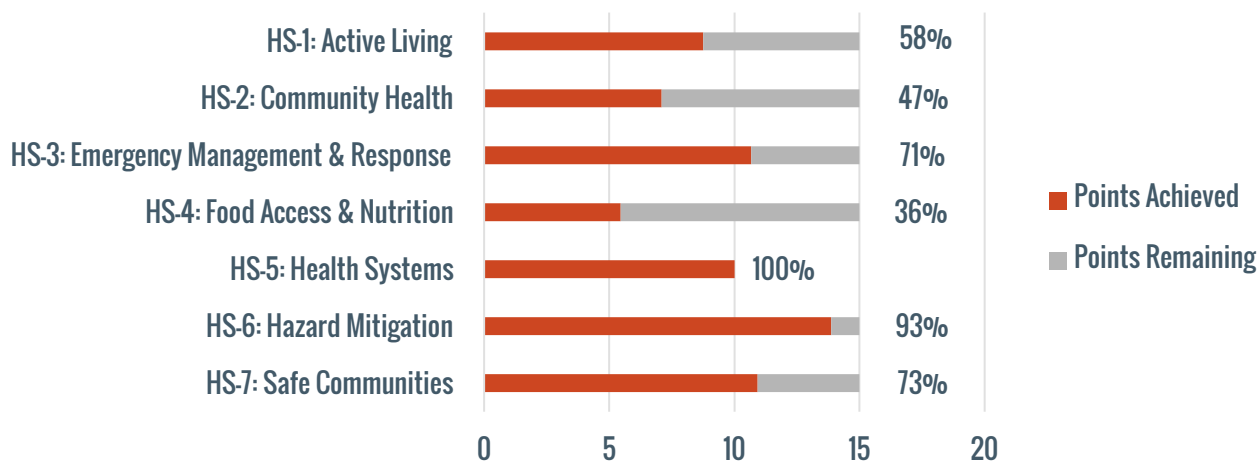
# HEALTH & SAFETY

## Overview

The seven objectives in STAR's Health & Safety goal area recognize that the development of healthy, safe, and resilient communities requires proactive efforts to prevent disease, injury, and premature death by fortifying protective factors and reducing risk factors that undermine healthy outcomes.

OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE & INTENT	AVAILABLE POINTS
HS-1	<b>Active Living:</b> Enable adults and kids to maintain healthy, active lifestyles by integrating physical activity into their daily routines	15
HS-2	<b>Community Health:</b> Achieve positive health outcomes and minimize health risk factors associated with behaviors and poor indoor air quality in schools and homes	15
HS-3	<b>Emergency Management &amp; Response:</b> Reduce harm to humans and property by utilizing collaborative approaches to increase capability and capacity to respond to emergency incidents	15
HS-4	<b>Food Access &amp; Nutrition:</b> Ensure that adults and children of all income levels have physical and economic access to fresh, healthful food and have opportunities to learn about nutritious eating and food safety	15
HS-5	<b>Health Systems:</b> Provide high quality local health systems that are accessible and responsive to community needs	10
HS-6	<b>Hazard Mitigation:</b> Reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to life and property from existing hazard events through an on-going process that occurs before, during, and after disasters	15
HS-7	<b>Safe Communities:</b> Prevent and reduce crime and increase perceptions of safety through interagency collaboration and with residents as empowered partners	15

Cedar Rapids achieved 66.8 out of 100 available points in the Health & Safety goal area. The City's top scoring objective was HS-5: Health Systems. The objectives with the greatest opportunity for improvement are HS-4: Food Access & Nutrition, and HS-2: Community Health.



Graph 14: Cedar Rapids' Health & Safety performance by objective.





# HEALTH & SAFETY

## Objective Analysis

### HS-1: ACTIVE LIVING

#### 8.8/15 points

Cedar Rapids received no credit for the two outcomes in HS-2, which ask applicants to demonstrate that more than 80% of adults have reported leisure-time physical activity within the past month and show an increase in the percentage of schools requiring physical activity.

The City received credit for nine of eleven actions. To improve in this objective, the City could consider creating guidelines to encourage the incorporation of active building design (an action done by 18 of 73 certified communities), and establishing school siting guidelines that give preferential considerations to locations that maximize the number of student who can walk or bicycle safely to school (done by 11 of 73).

### HS-2: COMMUNITY HEALTH

#### 7.1/15 points

Partial credit was received in the first outcome by demonstrating county-level achievement as a Top U.S. performer in the categories of poor/fair health, poor physical health days, and low birth weight; the City did not receive credit in the remaining outcomes that look at health behaviors and indoor air quality.

The City also received credit for seven of twelve available actions, built on a foundation that includes the *Together Healthy Linn: 2015 Community Health Assessment* and *Community Health Improvement Plan*. Cedar Rapids was also awarded *Blue Zone* worksite recognition for programs supporting employee health. Future local efforts to promote health outcomes could include the adoption of a health-in-all-policies statement for local decision-making.

### HS-3: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & RESPONSE

#### 10.7/15 points

Cedar Rapids received partial credit in two outcomes by showing that the fire department has earned an ISO rating of 2 through the *Public Protection Classification* system and for demonstrating that the local emergency management community is prepared to handle emergency events. Demonstration of adequate emergency response times and fire and police department accreditation were not achieved.

The City received credit in the actions by offering an *Emergency Preparedness Guide* and participating in the *Linn County Community Emergency Response Team*. Future efforts could include adopting a local comprehensive plan for emergency response that includes provisions for evacuating low-income, disabled, and other persons likely to need assistance (as 31 of 73 certified communities have done), and distributing emergency kits or supplies to low-income and vulnerable residents before hazardous events occur (17 of 73).

### HS-4: FOOD ACCESS & NUTRITION

#### 5.5/15 points

This objective aims to ensure that community members of all income levels have physical and economic access to fresh and healthful food and have opportunities to learn about nutrition. Cedar Rapids did not receive credit in the three outcomes, which look at access to healthful food, food security and assistance, and school nutrition.

The City did receive credit in six of eleven available actions for zoning supportive of urban





## HEALTH & SAFETY

### Objective Analysis, continued

agriculture, the *Food Environment Alliance*, the *Linn County Food Systems Council*, and the launch of the *Hawkeye Area Community Action Program mobile food pantry*, which delivers food to areas of the community without easy access to healthy food.

A valuable next step to move this objective forward would be to conduct an assessment of the local food system to inform priority geographic areas or populations for increased programming, as done by 28 certified communities. The City could also consider implementing an “Increase Your Food Bucks” program at farmer’s markets (done by 32 communities) to increase access to healthy food.

#### HS-5: HEALTH SYSTEMS

##### 10/10 points

Cedar Rapids received credit for all three outcomes and all eight actions in this objective. The City received partial credit in the outcomes by submitting county data that shows the community exceeds national standards for number of uninsured patients, diabetic monitoring, and mammography screening. The City demonstrated sufficient hospital capacity, with 1.14 hospitals per 50,000 residents, including *Mercy Medical*, *St. Luke’s*, and the *Iowa City VA Health Care System* outpatient clinic. Additionally, the *Mercy Medical Center* was ranked a top performer by the Joint Commission and *Linn County Public Health* received public health department accreditation in 2015.

#### HS-6: HAZARD MITIGATION

##### 13.9/15 points

To receive credit for the HS-6 outcomes, a community must first identify location-specific and full community hazards and then demonstrate that these hazards have been measurably mitigated. Cedar Rapids received credit in one outcome by

demonstrating substantial mitigation of residential and infrastructure systems to the location-specific hazard of flooding. No credit was received for the second outcome, which looks at communitywide hazard mitigation.

The City received credit for six of eight available actions due to the substantial efforts implemented after the 2008 flood, including:

- A city buy-out program that removed housing from flood hazard locations and supported displaced residents through a housing replacement program;
- Relocation of the former *Central Fire Station*, which was in the 100-year floodplain, to a less vulnerable site and designating it as an essential facility in terms of structural design loading and applicable building code requirements; and
- Construction of the *Sinclair Levee*.

To go further, the City could develop a post-disaster plan, an action done by 17 of 73 certified communities, and could increase community awareness of natural hazards through education and outreach materials, as done by 48 certified communities.

#### HS-7: SAFE COMMUNITIES

##### 10.9/15 points

Cedar Rapids received no credit in the outcomes, as property crimes exceed the required threshold, and no data on school violence rates was submitted. The submittal noted the school system does not currently have the data to support the school violence outcome. However, all eleven actions received credit. The City should focus on the outcomes to improve performance in this area.

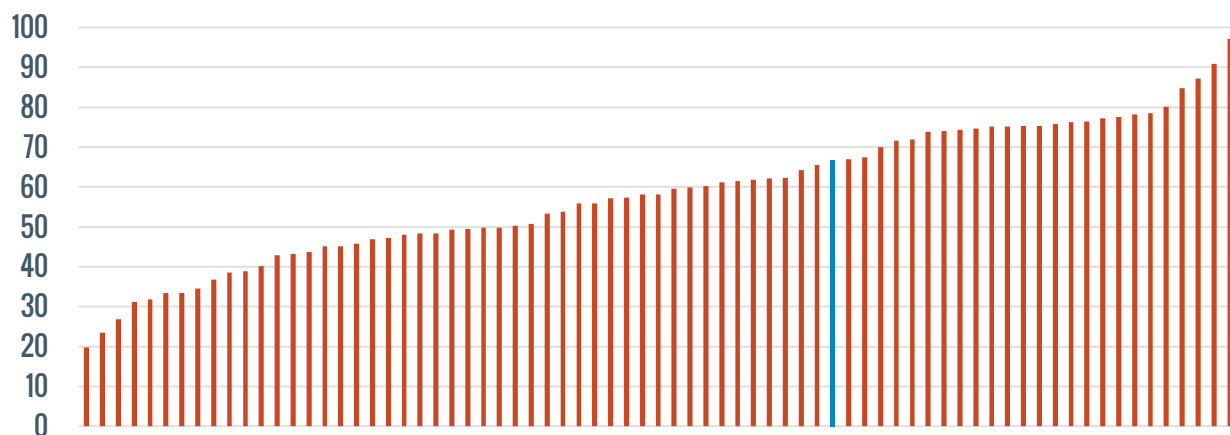




## HEALTH & SAFETY Comparative Analysis

The graph below shows how Cedar Rapids' Health & Safety total score compares to those from all STAR-certified communities. The City fell solidly in between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. Relative to other certified communities, Cedar Rapids received below median points in HS-1: Active Living, HS-3: Emergency Prevention & Response, and HS-4: Food Access & Nutrition. The City was near the median in HS-7: Safe Communities, and performed far above the median in HS-6: Hazard Mitigation. HS-2: Community Health and HS-5: Health Systems are markedly different objectives in Version 2.0 of the STAR rating system, so comparisons are limited in those two objectives. However, the City is likely below the median for HS-2 and above the median for HS-5 for those certified under Version 2.0.

Cedar Rapids received points in 37% of the available outcomes and 76% of the available actions across all objectives. Future efforts may seek to assess results from HS-2: Community Health within the context of the other objectives. For example, relative to other communities, HS-5: Health Systems scores very highly but HS-4: Food Access & Nutrition scores fairly low, and this may help to provide context to the results from HS-2: Community Health. Access to more outcome data for HS-1, HS-4, and HS-7 may support increased transparency and community interest in those areas as well.



Graph 15: Cedar Rapids' Health & Safety total score in blue, as compared to all certified STAR communities.

### HEALTH & SAFETY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Top U.S. performer in several clinical care categories, including the number of uninsured patients, diabetic monitoring, and mammography screening
- Class 2 ISO rating for the fire department
- Substantial efforts to improve flood resiliency, including removal of over 1,000 high risk residences and improvements to water and wastewater treatment plants





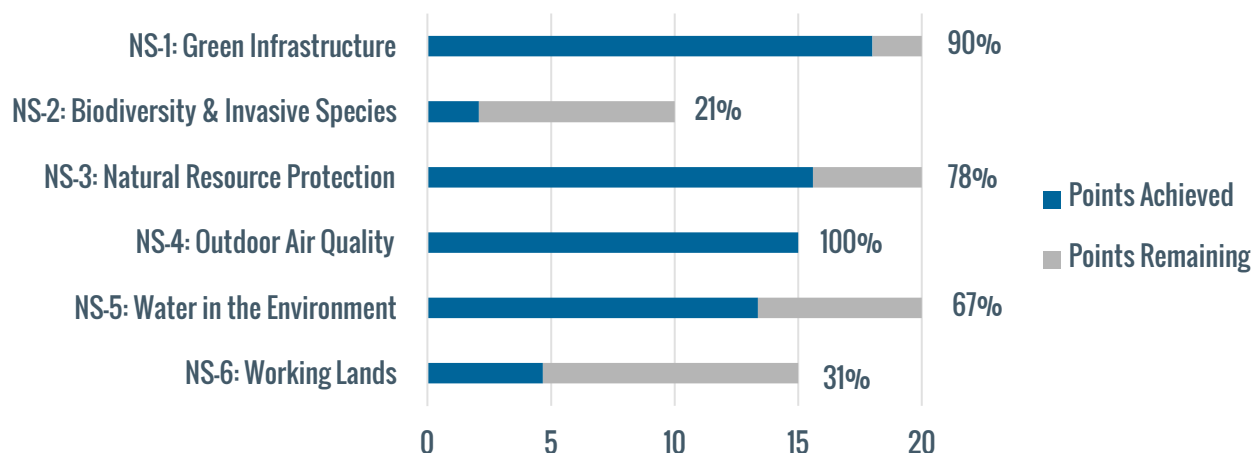
# NATURAL SYSTEMS

## Overview

The six objectives in the Natural Systems goal area help communities protect and restore the places that provide resources to support life. The goal area takes an ecosystem services approach and recognizes the wide range of benefits natural systems provide, such as food, water, and natural regulating processes affecting climate and floods.

OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE & INTENT	AVAILABLE POINTS
NS-1	<b>Green Infrastructure:</b> Design and maintain a network of green infrastructure features that integrate with the built environment to conserve ecosystem functions and provide associated benefits to human populations	20
NS-2	<b>Biodiversity &amp; Invasive Species:</b> Maintain the urban ecosystem habitat at levels that promote biodiversity and manage or prevent invasive species	10
NS-3	<b>Natural Resource Protection:</b> Protect, enhance, and restore natural ecosystems and cultural landscapes to confer resilience and support clean water and air, food supply, and public safety	20
NS-4	<b>Outdoor Air Quality:</b> Ensure that outdoor air quality is healthy for all segments of the human population and protects the welfare of the community	15
NS-5	<b>Water in the Environment:</b> Protect and restore the biological, chemical, and hydrological integrity of water in the natural environment	20
NS-6	<b>Working Lands:</b> Conserve and sustainability manage lands that provide ecosystem services and raw materials	15

Cedar Rapids achieved 68.7 of the 100 total available points in the Natural Systems goal area. The City achieved 100% of the available points in NS-4: Outdoor Air Quality and 90% of the available points in NS-1: Green Infrastructure. NS-2: Biodiversity & Invasive Species and NS-6: Working Lands are the objectives with the greatest opportunity for improvement; both objectives received fewer than 50% of available points.



Graph 16: Cedar Rapids' Natural Systems performance by objective.





# NATURAL SYSTEMS

## Objective Analysis

### NS-1: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

#### 18/20 points

This objective looks at how a community designs and maintains a network of green infrastructure features, such as low impact development methods, that integrate with the built environment to conserve ecosystem functions and provide benefits to human populations. The outcomes look at the percentage of land area covered by designated green infrastructure and the distribution of green infrastructure features across the community. Cedar Rapids received full credit in both objectives by showing that only 25.2% of the jurisdiction's land area consists of impervious surfaces, far below the threshold of 65%, and that 98% of the population lives within 1/3 mile from green infrastructure features.

The City also achieved seven of nine available actions. Foundational preparatory efforts include a *Cedar Rapids Tree Inventory*, the *GreenCR* section of the *Envision CR Plan*, the tree mitigation provision of the city code, and the storm water utility. A valuable next step could be to dedicate a percentage of funding to green infrastructure to ensure continued progress, a step completed by 19 of 73 certified communities.

### NS-2: BIODIVERSITY & INVASIVE SPECIES

#### 2.1/10 points

NS-2 aims to maintain the urban ecosystem habitat at levels that promote biodiversity and manage or prevent invasive species. The outcomes look at threatened species population sizes, habitat conservation, and invasive species management. Cedar Rapids did not submit data on the outcomes and achieved three of the ten available actions.

The City received credit for the *1,000-Acre Pollinator Initiative*, a substantial partnership with the City of Cedar Rapids, City of Marion, Linn County, and the Monarch Research Project. The project seeks to plant 1,000 acres of pollinator habitat and has planted nearly 400 acres to date.

Popular actions that other certified communities have commonly undertaken in NS-2 include:

- Ensuring that all local government-owned buildings use native and/or sustainable, site-appropriate species in landscaping (24 of 71);
- Partnering with volunteer groups to monitor and remove invasive species (41 of 73); and
- Informing residents or sellers about the benefits of native species and the hazards of invasive species (45 of 71).

### NS-3: NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

#### 15.6/20 points

The City of Cedar Rapids received credit for the outcome on natural resource area restoration by showing that 400 acres of prairie have been restored as part of the *1,000-Acre Pollinator Initiative*. No credit was received for maintaining natural resource acreage above recognized thresholds, achieving no-net-loss of riparian water bodies, or increasing the amount of land directly connected to regional natural systems.

The City received credit for seven of eight actions, many of which focus upon the substantial *1,000-Acre Pollinator Initiative*. The only action left on the table was to adopt land use regulations that establish appropriate wetland, stream, and shoreline buffers, a step completed by 45 of 73 certified communities.





# NATURAL SYSTEMS

## Objective Analysis, continued

### NS-4: OUTDOOR AIR QUALITY

#### 15/15 points

Cedar Rapids received full credit for the two outcomes in NS-4, which look at outdoor air quality. The first outcome requires communities to demonstrate attainment or maintenance status for all measured criteria air pollutants. The second requires the community to demonstrate that the total cancer risk from hazardous air pollutants is less than 50 per million—Cedar Rapids fell below this threshold at 32.965 per million.

Cedar Rapids could take attainment a step further by conducting a study to evaluate the geographic areas and subpopulations with the highest exposure to outdoor air pollutants, especially in consideration of environmental justice and equity impacts (an action completed by 13 of the 73 certified communities).

### NS-5: WATER IN THE ENVIRONMENT

#### 13.4/20 points

This objective looks at protecting and restoring the biological, chemical, and hydrological integrity of water in the natural environment. The outcomes assess watershed health, vulnerability, and usability. The City of Cedar Rapids did not apply for credit in the three outcomes, but did receive credit for seven of the eight actions.

The *Middle Cedar Partnership Project* (MCCP) is a substantial, note-worthy initiative that seeks to work with local conservation partners, farmers, and landowners to install best management practices such as cover crops, nutrient management, wetlands, and saturated buffers to help improve water quality, water quantity, and soil health in the Cedar River Watershed.

The one remaining action in this objective is to conduct a watershed health and vulnerability assessment of local waterways. Conducting such an assessment of the Cedar River Watershed could be of use in tracking the effectiveness of the MCCP. Seven of ten Version 2.0 STAR certified communities have completed this action.

### NS-6: WORKING LANDS

#### 4.7/15 points

This objective looks at conserving and sustainably managing lands that provide ecosystem services and raw materials. Cedar Rapids did not submit data on the outcomes in this objective, which look at working lands acreage, production, and best management practices. The City did receive credit in four of ten action measures.

Several of the actions that Cedar Rapids achieved focus on the *Middle Cedar Partnership Project* (MCCP), which provides education to future and current owners of working lands about best management practices and acts as a conservation program.

Potential avenues to advance efforts in NS-6 include:

- Conducting an assessment or inventory of the community's working lands;
- Including considerations for working lands in future land conservation or natural resource plans; and
- Promoting the value of products produced on local working lands to the public.





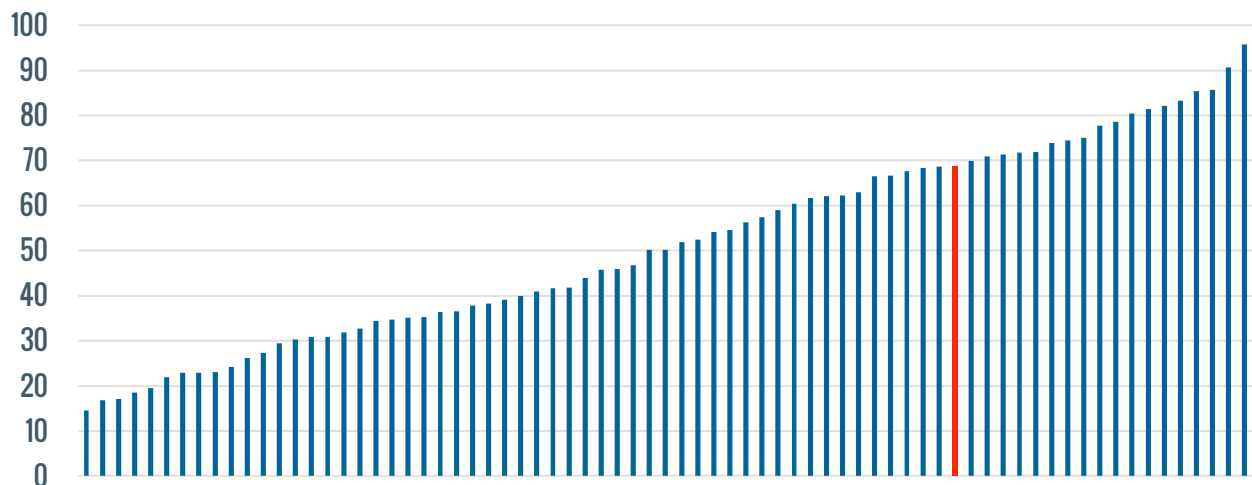


# NATURAL SYSTEMS

## Comparative Analysis

The graph below shows how Cedar Rapids' Natural Systems total score compares to other certified communities. Cedar Rapids scored right at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. Relative to other communities, the City received below median points in NS-2: Biodiversity & Invasive Species. The other five objectives all fell above median scores, with NS-1: Green Infrastructure and NS-3: Natural Resource Protection being the top relative performing objectives.

Cedar Rapids achieved points in 31% of the available outcomes and 62% of the available actions. NS-1: Green Infrastructure and NS-4: Outdoor Air Quality show strong outcome performance. Robust local action through programs like the Middle Cedar Partnership Project and the 1,000-Acre Pollinator Initiative is a great start, but more quantitative data may be needed to document or demonstrate how these actions are translating to outcomes. The City may want to focus on gathering data to report on the outcomes from NS-3: Natural Resource Protection, NS-5: Water in the Environment, and NS-6: Working Lands. In addition, the lowest performing objective overall and relative to other communities was NS-2: Biodiversity & Invasive Species, so this may be a good place to implement additional actions.

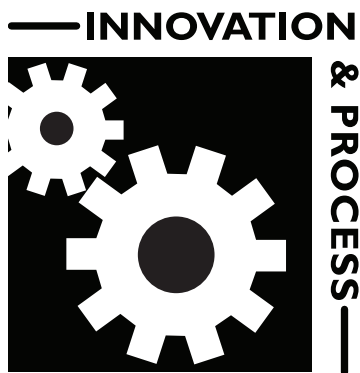


Graph 17: Cedar Rapids' Natural Systems total score in red, as compared to all certified STAR communities.

### NATURAL SYSTEMS HIGHLIGHTS:

- 400 acres of prairie have been restored through the 1,000-Acre Pollinator Initiative
- 25.2% of land area consists of impervious surfaces, far below the STAR threshold of 65%
- 98% of residents live within 1/3 mile of green infrastructure features
- Middle Cedar Partnership Project is working to improve watershed health





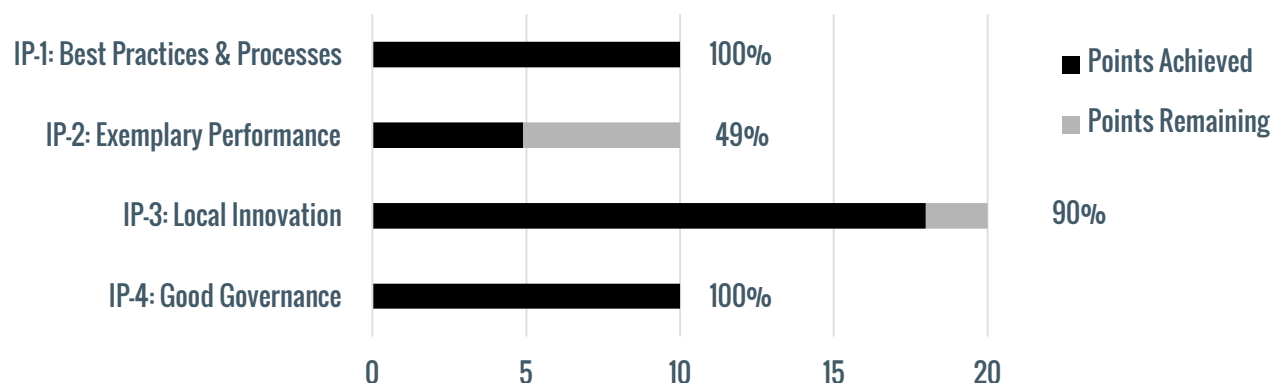
# INNOVATION & PROCESS

## Overview

The Innovation & Process category is an avenue for discovering emerging and leading edge practices that communities are implementing to improve sustainability outcomes.

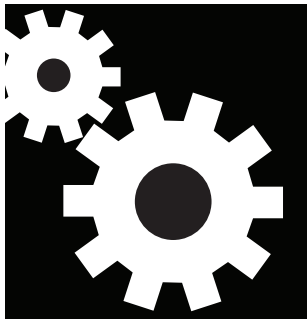
OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE & INTENT	AVAILABLE POINTS
IP-1	<b>Best Practices &amp; Process:</b> Recognize important local government practices and processes that underpin the implementation of sustainability measures and accelerate community-scale achievement across STAR goal areas	10
IP-2	<b>Exemplary Performance:</b> Reward performance in community level outcome measures that significantly exceeds the evaluation criteria established by the existing STAR Community Rating System	10
IP-3	<b>Local Innovation:</b> Encourage and reward creative, effective approaches to enhancing a community's environmental, social and/or economic sustainability not reflected in existing STAR objectives or evaluation measures	20
IP-4	<b>Good Governance:</b> Recognize the achievement of demonstrated outcomes and good practices in governance that elevate achievement and success rates across multiple goals and objectives	10

Cedar Rapids scored highly in the Innovation & Process category, achieving 42.9 of the 50 available points. The full 10 points were achieved in IP-1: Best Practices & Processes and IP-4: Good Governance. 90% of the points were achieved in IP-3: Local Innovation, and 49% were achieved in IP-2: Exemplary Performance.



Graph 18: Cedar Rapids' Innovation & Process scores.





# INNOVATION & PROCESS

## Objective Analysis

### IP-1: BEST PRACTICES & PROCESS

#### 10/10

IP-1 asks communities to submit best practices and innovative strategies in comprehensive planning, public engagement, codes and ordinances, and sustainability education.

Cedar Rapids received credit for the City's comprehensive planning and sustainability education efforts. Educational components include the Earth Day event, upcoming city stewardship tours, *Sustainable City Talks*, and a sustainable action event that is built upon the sustainable city talks (*Take Action! Energy, Water, and Waste Reduction*).

### IP-2: EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

#### 4.9/10 points

IP-2 rewards communities for going above and beyond the national standards required by STAR's outcome measures. Cedar Rapids received credit for exemplary performance in four objectives:

- *NS-1 Outcome 2: Green Infrastructure Distribution*, for exceeding the STAR threshold of 85% of the population living within 1/3-mile distance from green infrastructure features by submitting 98.3%;
- *CE-4 Outcome 2: Heat Island Mitigation Distribution*, for exceeding the STAR threshold of 85% of the population living within a reasonable distance from heat island mitigation features by submitting 98.3%;
- *BE-6 Outcome 3: Connectivity*, for exceeding the STAR threshold of 90% of households located within 3 miles of off-road trail, by submitting 99.9%; and
- *BE-2 Outcome 2: Water Footprint*, for demonstrating the ratio of water withdrawals

for human use to the total renewable water resources is less than 0.2, by submitting 0.0-0.1.

### IP-3: LOCAL INNOVATION

#### 18/20 points

The intent of IP-3 is for communities to submit new or innovative evaluation measures and methodologies that could eventually fit into the STAR framework. Cedar Rapids received credit for the submission of:

- *EAC-6: Programs & Services Action*: Provide job training opportunities and assistance for elderly workers to gain skills to re-enter or remain in the workforce;
- *CE-5: Programs & Services Action*: Establish a local program to help low-income residents improve water efficiency and reduce utility bills;
- *EJ-6: Programs & Services Action*: Provide workforce training for special needs population; and
- *HS-6: Enforcement & Incentives Action*: Create incentives to minimize hazardous chemicals kept on site.

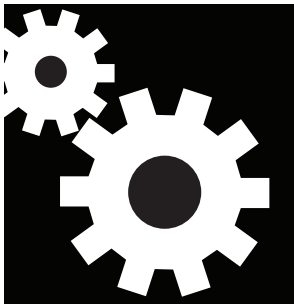
### IP-4: GOOD GOVERNANCE

#### 10/10 points

IP-4 looks to recognize the achievement of demonstrated outcomes and good practices in governance that elevate achievement and success rates across multiple STAR goals and objectives.

Cedar Rapids received credit for having a *High Quality Moody's Rating* of Aa1 in 2017, and for having a designated Sustainability Coordinator position within the city government.

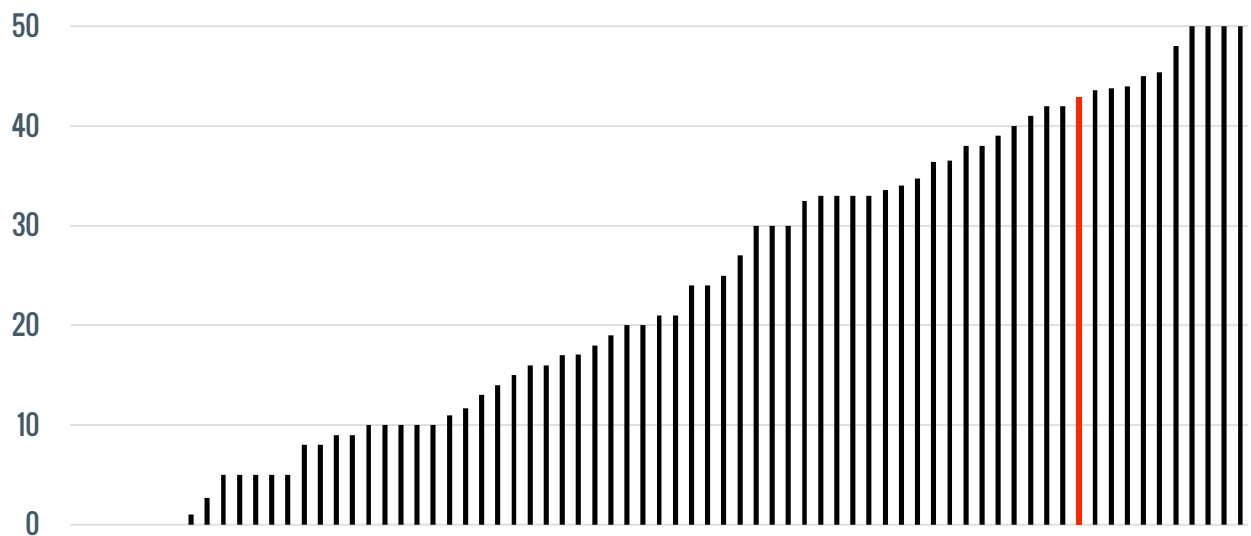




## INNOVATION & PROCESS

### Comparative Analysis

The graph below shows how Cedar Rapids' Innovation & Process total score compares to those from other certified communities. Cedar Rapids' score falls solidly in the top quartile. Relative to other communities, Cedar Rapids received above median scores in all four IP areas.



Graph 19: Cedar Rapids' Innovation & Process total score in red, as compared to all certified STAR communities.



## NEXT STEPS

Certification is just the beginning of Cedar Rapids' STAR Journey. The results of the assessment provide insight to the current state of sustainability in the community and ideas for improvement and next steps.

## BENEFITS OF STAR CERTIFICATION

Communities join STAR for many reasons and report a variety of benefits from STAR certification. These can help to communicate the value of STAR certification and provide ideas for how to use Cedar Rapids' STAR rating going forward.

Communities who achieve certification under the STAR Community Rating System are:

- Aligning local plans and priorities with a national sustainability framework,
- Strengthening local metrics,
- Demonstrating a commitment to data-driven performance management,
- Increasing transparency and accountability through public-facing reporting,
- Gaining competitive advantage and attracting funding,
- Catalyzing action in implementing solutions and best practices for sustainability,
- Communicating resilience and risk management to municipal bond agencies,
- Integrating health and equity into existing sustainability or environmental efforts,
- Strengthening civic, university, and governmental partnerships throughout the community,
- Building and branding a culture of local sustainability,
- Improving sustainability communication and education,
- Identifying gaps and prioritize future investment, and
- Celebrating local progress and achieving national recognition.

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

In order to improve a STAR rating, STAR Communities recommends that the local government perform either a gaps analysis or a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. Some tips for how to start:

1. Look at the objectives with lower scores.
2. Ascertain why points were missed. Some possibilities:
  - a. The data wasn't available.
  - b. The data was available, but had not been tracked for long enough to demonstrate a trend line.
  - c. The data was available, but did not meet the STAR trend line or threshold requirement.
  - d. The outcome wasn't a community priority for reporting.
  - e. Didn't have GIS analysis capability or another required skillset to complete the analysis.
  - f. Couldn't find the correct data holder.
3. Prioritize measures for future tracking based upon existing community plans and needs assessments.
4. Identify opportunities for future actions, such as new policies or programs.
5. Develop a plan and timeline for the new actions and measures.
6. Develop community working groups or committees to assist in implementation, or task a green team or other existing sustainability group with aiding in implementation.
7. Consider embedding STAR metrics into annual reports, plans, and local government decision-making processes.

