

**Van Meter Strategic Planning
Dallas County Development Alliance**

#28338.00

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Van Meter Visioning Survey

1. What is your gender?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Male	34.4%	43
Female	64.8%	81
Prefer not to say	0.8%	1
<i>answered question</i>		125
<i>skipped question</i>		0

2. What is your age?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Under 18	0.8%	1
18–30	9.6%	12
31–45	57.6%	72
46–64	24.8%	31
65+	6.4%	8
Prefer not to say	0.8%	1
<i>answered question</i>		125
<i>skipped question</i>		0

3. How many children do you have living with you?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
0	27.6%	34
1	12.2%	15
2	34.1%	42
3	17.9%	22
4	8.1%	10
5+	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		123
<i>skipped question</i>		2

Van Meter Visioning Survey

4. Where do you live?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Within Van Meter city limits	64.8%	81
Within school district boundaries	19.2%	24
Wildwood	2.4%	3
Deer Hunters Run	1.6%	2
Napa Valley	1.6%	2
Rural – Dallas County	4.8%	6
Other	5.6%	7
Other (please specify)		5
<i>answered question</i>		125
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Number	Other (please specify)
1	Adel– business owner in Van Meter
2	Vermillion, South Dakota
3	Hickory Lodge
4	Rural Madison County
5	Austin, Texas

5. How long have you been at this location?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Under 1 year	3.3%	4
1–4 years	28.7%	35
5–10 years	25.4%	31
10+ years	42.6%	52
<i>answered question</i>		122
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Van Meter Visioning Survey

6. What is your occupation?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Agriculture	2.5%	3
Banking/Insurance/Finance	27.9%	34
Construction/Real Estate	4.9%	6
Designer/Art	1.6%	2
Education	9.0%	11
Food/Lodging	0.8%	1
Manufacturing/Transportation	4.1%	5
Medical/Healthcare	9.8%	12
Retail	2.5%	3
Science & Technology	9.8%	12
Retired	8.2%	10
K-12 Student K-12 Student	0.8%	1
Full-time college student	2.5%	3
Other	19.7%	24
Other (please specify)		21
<i>answered question</i>		122
<i>skipped question</i>		3

Number	Other (please specify)
1	daycare
2	E-Learning
3	daycare provider
4	stay at home mom
5	Wholesale
6	State Government
7	State of Iowa
8	home maker
9	reception
10	management
11	Retirement Community Mgmt & Development
12	Sales
13	SALES
14	Closed Captioned
15	public works
16	us postal service
17	model and talent management
18	Office work
19	in home daycare
20	Association Management
21	government employee

Van Meter Visioning Survey

7. What is your primary travel destination?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Work	77.9%	95
School	10.7%	13
Entertainment	6.6%	8
Recreation	8.2%	10
Shopping	23.8%	29
answered question		122
skipped question		3

Van Meter Visioning Survey

8. Where do you work?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Van Meter	21.1%	24
West Des Moines	25.4%	29
Waukee	0.9%	1
Adel	3.5%	4
De Soto	0.9%	1
Des Moines	34.2%	39
Indianola	0.0%	0
Winterset	0.0%	0
Other	14.0%	16
Other (please specify)		18
<i>answered question</i>		114
<i>skipped question</i>		11

Number	Other (please specify)
1	Johnston
2	home
3	Clive
4	Clive, IA
5	RETIRED
6	Urbandale
7	Urbandale
8	Ankeny
9	at home
10	retired
11	Retired
12	retired
13	retired
14	retired
15	Urbandale
16	all southern Dallas county
17	Austin, Texas
18	Urbandale– out of town/out of state

Van Meter Visioning Survey

9. What brought you to Van Meter?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Born/Raised Here	19.8%	24
K–12 School System	33.9%	41
Housing Options	17.4%	21
Small Town Characteristics	38.0%	46
Convenient Commute	19.8%	24
Close to Family/Friends	13.2%	16
Work in Community	8.3%	10
Other	5.8%	7
Other (please specify)		9
<i>answered question</i>		121
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Number	Other (please specify)
1	husband grew up here
2	Husband
3	Reasonable housing prices before the market decline
4	smaller school, grade size
5	My husband was born/raised in Van Meter
6	Love small town living
7	spouse grew up here
8	married someone living here
9	Parents moved to Van Meter

10. How long do you foresee living within the Greater Van Meter Community?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
0–1 years	2.6%	3
2–5 years	10.3%	12
5–10 years	12.0%	14
10+ years	75.2%	88
<i>answered question</i>		117
<i>skipped question</i>		8

Van Meter Visioning Survey

11. What will keep you here?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	88
<i>answered question</i>	88
<i>skipped question</i>	37

Number	Response Text
1	small town family feel. Love to let kids ride bike around town and not worry, etc.
2	Friends, location
3	Family
4	work, friends, convenient to Des Moines
5	children ,like the small town but still close to big city
6	Education and way of life
7	Friendly small town life, exceptional school
8	location/small town/school
9	nothing
10	A plan for continual growth of our community, so our school can continue to grow.
11	Family
12	Small town feel, school system and other amenities.
13	Small town values & some distance from DSM.
14	family
15	Commitment to remaining a "small town"...
16	Small Town Environment
17	Closer grocery store.
18	Good school. Family.
19	Bringing commercial business to our town. School.
20	The privacy
21	school and people
22	the small town.
23	Family & School System
24	The school and small town culture.
25	small town community, jobs in central Iowa
26	Small town environment, good school system
27	school system
28	small town characteristics
29	Location to work and family living in VM
30	All of the above.
31	The small town characteristics
32	Decent housing and low cost of living.
33	I love the people and the location. Small town living means a lot to me!
34	Small town charm. Low crime.
35	School district
36	"Small" school system, small town atmosphere but continue to change with the "times".
37	Good school district
38	Strong, independent school district. Strong community that values pride of ownership, well maintained houses, yards, public buildings. A stand out community that values input and respect for city leaders.
39	Raising the family

Van Meter Visioning Survey

11. What will keep you here?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	88
<i>answered question</i>	88
<i>skipped question</i>	37

Number	Response Text
40	Schools, Continued growth, increase in goods and services available to the community
41	small school, nice town
42	specifically, a swimming pool and grocery store....and inconvenience at present
43	Keeping kids in a small community/school district. Not integrating/merging the school system with surrounding communities & continued safety for the kids. We can go for walks and be relaxed and not worry too much. –Explanation for #12: I like it that VM proper has things to walk to.
44	things to walk to.
45	Job
46	Small town, school district, people/friends.
47	the school
48	Family
49	established here
50	The small town community, the people.
51	good, growing school district growth in the community
52	my job
53	small town living
54	small town characteristics
55	better drinking water. more walking trails.
56	schools. great place to raise my family.
57	family
58	having a good small school with teachers that care
59	relationships
60	location
61	Strong school and great neighbors!
62	Family
63	Kids in school
64	Lower taxes, school improvement, clean up run down properties and eye sores
65	Small town felling.
66	a small town not big time ideas
67	small town living w/low taxes and low crime rate
68	Small size of the town
69	Work location, housing
70	investment in house
71	90 plus years old... established in home The school – it is Van Meter's main focal point and a strong focus needs to be made to keep it progressive and
72	focused on the community.
73	small school district
74	Friends and neighbors
75	good school, not crowded
76	school system

Van Meter Visioning Survey

11. What will keep you here?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	88
<i>answered question</i>	88
<i>skipped question</i>	37

Number	Response Text
77	lower property taxes
78	lower property taxes
79	Rural lifestyle – great people and neighbors
80	small town atmosphere
81	Small Town
82	The small community and school district
83	The schools, and the people....
84	good school system; job opportunities in DSM metro area; Van Meter continuing to grow and thrive; housing opportunities
85	Our youngest child – until she graduates
86	school and family
87	keep it small
88	small town/school and ease of travel

Van Meter Visioning Survey

12. What best describes your preferred living environment?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
A downtown—like environment with shops, restaurants, and	6.7%	8
A compact neighborhood where everything is a convenient walk	35.8%	43
A planned or gated community with a higher level of privacy	7.5%	9
Rural	50.0%	60
<i>answered question</i>		120
<i>skipped question</i>		5

Van Meter Visioning Survey

13. What do you do for fun?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Hunting/Fishing/Canoeing	42.4%	50
Biking/Walking/Jogging	71.2%	84
Outdoor Sports	49.2%	58
Indoor Recreation	33.1%	39
Festivals/Farmer's Markets	41.5%	49
Theatre/Arts	28.8%	34
Coffee Shops / Dining Out	48.3%	57
Winery/Brewery	16.9%	20
Concerts	29.7%	35
Dancing/Night Clubs	10.2%	12
Shopping/Antiquing	43.2%	51
Other Other	11.0%	13
Other (please specify)		16
answered question		118
skipped question		7

Number	Other (please specify)
1	go to my children's activities, scrapbooking
2	gardening
3	gardening
4	Playing outside with the kids which can get hard when people are SPEEDING by in their cars and blowing through Stop signs.
5	Camping
6	Travel
7	Golf, yoga
8	attending children/grandchildren's events
9	camping and reading
10	horseback riding
11	scrapbooking, photography
12	sewing gardening crafts
13	Camping
14	gardening and hobbies
15	Tubing down the raccoon river and stop in VM for lunch.
16	camping/horseback riding; fixing cars

Van Meter Visioning Survey

14. What development would you support around Van Meter?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Expanded Network of Trails	52.1%	61
Expanded Selection of Dining	48.7%	57
Hotels/Bed & Breakfast	9.4%	11
Parks	45.3%	53
Band shell	13.7%	16
Camping/RV sites/Boat Launch	26.5%	31
Grocery/Retail	71.8%	84
Entertainment	32.5%	38
Community/Senior Activity Center	39.3%	46
Daycare/Preschool Offerings	18.8%	22
Teen/Youth Programs	44.4%	52
Commercial Commercial Space	14.5%	17
Expanded City Offices	17.9%	21
Wind Energy Farm	22.2%	26
Energy Reduction Programs	23.1%	27
Fitness Facility	53.0%	62
Street Improvements	33.3%	39
Single Family Housing	26.5%	31
Multi-family Housing	8.5%	10
Adult Educational Opportunities	20.5%	24
Truck Stop/Service Facility	3.4%	4
Community Gardens	19.7%	23
Other	10.3%	12
Other (please specify)		23
<i>answered question</i>		117
<i>skipped question</i>		8

Number	Other (please specify)
1	Swimming Pool
2	Updated Water System Expanded Public Safety Building
3	I would support a public safety building
4	Public safety facility
5	An all weather track for patrons to utilize. We have a lot of walkers around town with limited sidewalks that presents a danger to all !!!
6	Our parks need a definite upgrade. The park by City Hall is embarrassing. It in "Downtown" Van Meter and the equipment is ancient. A new coat of paint can only hide so much. The city can apply for grants to have rubber flooring put in at the parks. Waukee and some parks in WDM have it. It is wonderful for special needs children who can get out of the wheelchairs and crawl around. It looks as though to much funding has been put into Johnson Park (which is nice) that is located all the way across town and unless people now where to look they aren't ever going to see it. And yet the primary eyesore (Downtown) apparently receives no attention. Our youth need some where to "hang out". Ice cream shop or community center with music and games would make an absolute fortune. The won't be on the interstates and the money would stay local.

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Other (please specify)		23
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<i>skipped question</i>		8

Number	Other (please specify)
7	A small town cafe or dairy Shoppe would be nice. Since the snow cone building is never open anymore in the summer. The kids need something. Also having concessions during little league games would be nice, maybe some of the school fundraisers could each have a night.
8	City needs to clean up before it considers expanding. Cars parked in yards, commercial business and equipment in residential neighborhoods, no apparent code requirements, and so on.
9	On fitness facility, I would like to have racquetball courts available.
10	Would like to see the community growing with a few additions, but not to the point where it becomes a "big" suburb of DM.
11	Bike Trail/Walking Trail
12	adding a swimming pool for summer recreation
13	athletic fields
14	It would be nice to see a new Fire Station.
15	bigger school or a separate high school and elementary.
16	Parks are a major concern. Existing parks are too small (next to city hall), poorly accessible (Johnson Park), or limited use (Trindle). Having a large Trucking company smack dab in the middle of town is also another sore spot.
17	Blue collar employment
18	Grocery store options

Van Meter Visioning Survey

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Other	10.3%	12
Other (please specify)		23
answered question		117
skipped question		8

Number	Other (please specify)
19	While the close proximity to Des Moines makes VM a convenient place to live, it creates a bedroom community. I think A focus on available space for owner-operated businesses (insurance, attorney, CPA, etc) would be a popular option.
20	Local eating establishment
21	water quality – soft water
22	Bring back a England's type Ice Cream Shop and Edwards type restaurant and bakery
23	bait shop, alternative energy not wind, too expensive not enough energy

Van Meter Visioning Survey

15. Should Van Meter partner with neighboring communities to expand opportunities?			
Answer Options	Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Recreation	Recreation	70.5%	67
Development	Residential Development	10.5%	10
Development	Commercial Development	31.6%	30
Development	Industrial Development	22.1%	21
Marketing	Marketing	23.2%	22
Festival/event	Festival/events	65.3%	62
Other	Other	4.2%	4
Other (please specify)	Other (please specify)	14	14
<i>answered question</i>		95	95
<i>skipped question</i>		30	30

Number	Other (please specify)
1	shared equipment/personnel
2	Not clear on exactly what you are asking.
3	We should definitely get a pool for Van Meter. Then we wouldn't have to bus kids to Winterset or Dallas Center for rec swimming. Yes there would be a startup cost but it would be so worth it. And it could go where the run down car lot is "Down Town". Behind Casey's, across from Casey's.
4	?
5	Better water supply. Van Meter water is extremely hard, which is ruining appliances and pipes. When VM had the option to hook on to rural water the vote was to stay independent....which is too bad...those people that voted it down must have a lot of \$\$ laying around to afford water softeners & salt, new appliances and pipes in there houses!!
6	It needs to work on the problems it has before taking on new challenges
7	Don't know enough about it.
8	No
9	need more info
10	Industrial and commercial development add to the tax base while residential tends to put a strain on it – just ask Wauke.
11	NO!!!
12	NO!!!
13	Small bike rides from Van Meter to some other small town and back, and the next you do it opposite, so both towns benefit from the lunch crowd. A street dance at night would be fun.
14	I would like to expand but stay independent

Van Meter Visioning Survey

16. How important is:					
Answer Options	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Van Meter Entry Signage	45	54	15	1.74	114
Community Identity Feature	51	49	12	1.65	112
Street Beautification	50	59	4	1.59	113
Downtown Appearance	54	55	5	1.57	114
Energy Efficiency Incentives	61	50	3	1.49	114
Recycling Programs	66	44	4	1.46	114
Expanded City Website	19	66	26	2.06	111
Other (please specify)					16
answered question					115
skipped question					10

Number	Other (please specify)
1	expanded library services—programs continued park promoted activities
2	Public Safety Facility
3	Not a lot has changed in the 20 years I have lived in Van Meter. School has new buildings, Downtown has had very little change. New development South has not done much to improve the city. We plan on moving from Van Meter in 1–2 years now that our kids have graduated. The school system is the main reason we moved to the city. Put a lot of your efforts toward the school system is my recommendation.
4	The laundry mat and hair place need to replace there sign. It is in horrible disarray and should not be the first thing you see when you drive into Van Meter. A NEW PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING would make a huge statement that the city does care about the community. Taking care of the city is also taking care of the people that protect it and run it. Having more visible law enforcement is VERY Important. The police need to be present and in plane view during drop off to school and pick up. We need to have bigger stop signs so that people can see them. Writing tickets would be a HUGE revenue opportunity and way more important than salvage titles.
5	BETTER WATER OPTIONS OR CITY HELP WITH WATER SOFTNER IN OUR HOMES!!
6	Don't know what you mean by "entry signage". (Do you mean signs on the interstate that say Van Meter?). Don't know what you mean by "identity feature". (Do you mean some kind of city logo or catchy little phrase?)
7	Downtown appearance??? There is no down town. Any money spent on it would be wasted. Most building would be more cost effective to raze
8	I don't know what a Community Identity Feature is.
9	I would like to see a new fire station. New water system in town.
10	I think we could really improve water quality.
11	Van Meter needs an identity. I work in West Des Moines – most coworkers have never heard of Van Meter even though it's ten minutes away. The best thing that could happen is unfortunately not controlled by the city. Anyone who has spent any amount of time in small Iowa towns knows that the primary identity, and primary source of pride, is the school. Van Meter's school facilities are an embarrassment. We need a new school yesterday.
12	dog tie up enforced & tax those people w/animals (more revenue for the town).
13	the quality of the water does bother me... I think we should have better water to drink and that won't damage appliances because of its hardness. there are times it is brown and will discolor laundry and doesn't look good to drink
14	would like to see improvements to water
15	walking trails safety business hours more convenient more youth activities
16	Tax Incentive for Energy Star Homes, be the town to live in where you're helping the environment and preserving the feel of the rural area.

Van Meter Visioning Survey

17. How would you describe or 'sell' Van Meter?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	74
<i>answered question</i>	74
<i>skipped question</i>	51

Number	Response Text
1	Sell on education and children activities
2	A growing small community with a quality school system and a sense of pride with the residents.
3	Minutes away from the Big City where smalltown charm is at its very best.
4	small town living close to big city
5	Great schools in a small town yet close to the city.
6	Good family environment – safe/supportive
7	friendly small town with a great school system
8	Small town Iowa with a quick commute to Des Moines
9	A small community with everything at its disposal...we have easy access to the big city, yet we are able to live in a small, connected community. We have the opportunity for a multitude of recreation activities with being right on the river. We have beautiful hillsides and an opportunity for commercial development on both sides of the community with I–80 to the north and F–90 to the south.
10	A great community with almost everything you need and close enough to Des Moines for the rest.
11	Small town environment with a fantastic school.
12	small close–knit community living with great schools
13	Quiet, peaceful, friendly setting within minutes of "big–city" amenities.
14	Friendly City, On the Move, Great School District,
15	A very quaint community. Most activities revolve around the school or the churches in town.
16	A quiet town, good school.
17	Second to none school system.
18	Quilt, friendly town great place to live.
19	I like how it is described on the web site but if I think of something cool I'll let you know.
20	Better and new improved playground floors school, park. The school can also get a grant for new playground floors. There is no reason not to. Waukee has a new floor it is on their website.
21	small town feel – close to big city living
22	Not a lot for kids to do. close enough to Des Moines for work.
23	It's a nice small town to live in, has a good school system, and is close to Des Moines.
24	It's a bedroom city that is land locked with a good school that is close to Des Moines. Until the landowners around the town are willing to sell and someone is willing to develop a business community that is all Van Meter is going to be.
25	Easy commute to Jordan Creek Parkway for dining, shopping, large library, etc.
26	Great small town with great school system, except the water problem would be a draw back, prepare to have extra expenses involving water softeners, salt for the water softeners, appliances & etc.
27	Small town living but close to the "big" city
28	A small town atmosphere and a safe place to call home.
29	Quite small town with low crime.
30	If you don't want to live in a run down trailer court but want the same curb side appeal then move to Van Meter.
31	It is a wonderful place to raise children, we have a tight knit community with people looking out for one another and our school system is exceptional!
32	A quiet town that's within a short drive to all that Des Moines has to offer.

Van Meter Visioning Survey

17. How would you describe or 'sell' Van Meter?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	74
<i>answered question</i>	74
<i>skipped question</i>	51

Number	Response Text
33	Small town that is close enough to Des Moines for work and other opportunities. A good school system that knows every student. A community that cares about each other.
34	Small town with strong values, with a big town convenience.
35	A small rural community close enough to Des Moines for the perks, with a school that strives on "keeping" the small school atmosphere for the children of the community.
36	small town, good school
37	small close-knit community while being close to the big city
38	Small close-knit community with short commute to larger city.
39	Small town living 15 minutes from West Des Moines; 30 minutes from Downtown Des Moines.
40	Small quiet community. Good school system
41	Small-town atmosphere with a great school system—yet still very close to the city
42	A great Place to call home
43	Small town living close to DSM, great school system, friendly community
44	quiet small town living
45	very nice community with good, caring people
46	great small town close to des Moines; safe
47	small close community
48	it is a small quiet town in the middle of nowhere yet not to far from town(dsm)
49	Quiet, with a "we don't want to give away how great it is here attitude"
50	Small town friendly with big town nearness.
51	Great community!
52	Quiet. Safe.
53	Home Town community living.
54	use to be a quite small town w/ more people than dogs
55	Great small community only minutes away from Des Moines with an exceptional school district.
56	small town living
57	Close knit neighborhoods. Rural scenic rolling hills. A great place for raising families. Small town feeling close to the city life.
58	small town close to a city
59	small town living
60	Close knit community with excellent schools that is close to major metropolitan amenities.
61	A place where all eating, grocery, fuel are in close proximity
62	far enough away to be quiet, close enough to be convenient
63	excellent school friendly small-town atmosphere
64	excellent school friendly small-town atmosphere
65	Great public schools – location, location, location! lower cost of living/ housing options. Great opportunity for commercial development – services – retail – small industrial
66	a quiet small town with mainly single family homes, good school and close to shopping and work
67	A place where everyone knows everyone.
68	small town community with the city conveniences within 1/2 hour drive

Van Meter Visioning Survey

17. How would you describe or 'sell' Van Meter?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	74
<i>answered question</i>	74
<i>skipped question</i>	51

Number	Response Text
69	A growing community with a lot of potential for families and small business along with a great school district
70	quiet little bedroom community, close commute to des Moines
71	Small town USA
72	Small town safety 15 minutes from big city amenities
73	friendly, nice, quiet
74	quiet, small town living