IOWA'S LIVING ROADWAYS

Community Visioning Program
Annual Report 2015


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JEWELERS

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Executive Summary

The Iowa's Living Roadways Program was born of an effort to provide design services to rural Iowa communities. The program is a collaboration involving the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), the Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF), Iowa State University (ISU), and Trees Forever.

Iowa's Living Roadways consists of the Community Visioning Program and the Projects Program. The Community Visioning Program provides planning and landscape design assistance to Iowa's small communities. The Projects Program funds the planting of native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees along transportation corridors.

Both the Visioning and Project Programs provide assistance to Iowa communities with populations of fewer than 10,000, because these smaller communities often lack the resources and expertise needed to design and implement landscape enhancements.

The 2015 visioning communities are Bondurant, Dunkerton, Elkhart, Fairfield, Nashua, Onawa, Osage, Riceville, Ringsted, and Vail. The sustainability and success of the program is evident by the number of actual communities it has touched. Since Iowa's Living Roadways was created in 1996, 209 communities have participated in the Visioning Program and the Projects Program has awarded grants for 500 projects.

Communities

Bondurant

Bondurant is located near the Des Moines metro area along US Highway 65, just north of Interstate 80 and Altoona. Since the 2000 census, the population of this growing community has more than doubled, currently with approximately 3,800 residents. The Chichaqua Valley Trail—a 25-mile trail from Baxter to just east of Berwick—passes through Bondurant, providing a safe connection to the Des Moines area trail system for cyclists and pedestrians and bringing visitors into the community.

Bondurant applied to the Community Visioning Program to build upon previous planning and design efforts to create new amenities and improve transportation networks. US Highway 65 is the most heavily traveled road through Bondurant and includes two of the four entrances into the community. As such, this corridor is a high priority among steering committee members. The visioning design team proposed native grass and wildflower plantings and a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees to screen and frame views along the highway corridor and project the community's identity to passersby.

A lack of connectivity throughout the community is another issue that Bondurant residents want to address. Although the community has recently built many connections among its neighborhoods, parks, and schools, some neighborhoods remain disconnected from the rest of town. The visioning design team proposed a Greenway Trail in the city-owned drainage district that would connect the Chichaqua Trail to the proposed Gay Lea Wilson Trail and School Connection Trail. This trail system would link neighborhoods on the east, south, and north parts of town. A family of way-finding signage is also proposed to direct trail users and other visitors to local attractions.

The Greenway Trail would address storm-water management by incorporating regraded topography and native plants to infiltrate and clean rainwater, as well as to provide wildlife habitat and piquant areas in the landscape. There is also interest in the creation of an arboretum trail loop to educate people about plant and tree diversity through a mobile phone app and QR coded tags on trees.

In addition to the Chichaqua Valley Trail, Bondurant is home to several green spaces and recreation areas, including the Bondurant Regional Sports Complex and Lake Petocka. Lake Petocka and adjacent park are already heavily used by residents. Improving water access and consolidating programmed sports fields would provide space for outdoor attractions such as an amphitheater/ performance space. These updated spaces could draw regional visitors for events and personal recreation and become assets to Bondurant's economy and overall quality of life.

Bondurant has a defined downtown area, yet it lacks anything that residents would consider the heart of the community. The design team developed a concept to make Main Street feel more like the community's core. Proposed parking areas are behind buildings, allowing the streetscape to function at a pedestrian scale. Mixed-use buildings are proposed, with commercial and retail space on the first floor and housing on the second. Keeping new construction architecturally consistent with the street's historic buildings would create a distinct identity downtown, and new plantings and amenities would contribute to a strong sense of place for the community.

Trailhead Depot and Lake Petocka

Trees Forever Facilitator: Leslie Berckes
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Jeff Cook
Lori Cook
Karen Hudson
Jen Keeler
Brian Lohse
Allison McNichols
Trina Nickel
Dan Olson
Melissa Winger

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1. *The design team proposed planting pollinator-friendly native species to unify trail aesthetics and identity.*
2. *Connectivity enhancements consider year-round recreation opportunities, including the addition of a sledding hill.*
3. *Mixed-used development with parking in the rear would create a downtown corridor focused on pedestrian experience.*
4. *Highway 65 would become a community gateway with the addition of native and screen plantings.*
5. *The Bondurant signage palette, tailored to each installation, focuses on an historical, regional identity.*
6. *Proposals for Lake Petocka Park include an amphitheater, trails, vegetation, and more.*

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Dunkerton

Dunkerton is a northeastern Iowa community 22 miles east of Waterloo and 8 miles north of Highway 20 at the intersection of State Highway 281 and County Road C66. This small town of 852 people has a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities.

Residents have access to two natural areas within city limits. Charma Park is a venue for baseball, Frisbee, and disc golf. Across Highway 281 from the park is a wetland area called Lake Skimpus. Crane Creek passes through both areas and is a popular place for fishing. The Charma Park Trail passes north through Charma Park to just beyond city limits. The trail begins at the Charma Bridge, a concrete spandrelarch bridge constructed in 1909 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The new Riverwalk Trail that connects to the Charma Park Trail and follows the south edge of the park is a favorite venue for biking and walking. During the winter, residents snowmobile on two designated trails. The Dunkerton Community School District, which hosts many activities for students and residents, is considered the heart of the community. The campus serves grades K–12 in one facility and has a playground and ball diamonds.

The Dunkerton steering committee would like to build on its existing recreational amenities by linking them via a looped trail system. The visioning design concept features a master trail plan that includes a mix of off-street trails, shared roadways, and sidewalk connections that link Dunkerton's parks, neighborhoods, schools, and other destinations. The plan also proposes benches, trash receptacles, and lighting to make the Riverwalk Trail more accessible and welcoming. Connectivity between the riverwalk and the larger community should increase use. Design recommendations also include native plantings to make the trail system functional, beautiful, and enjoyable. Trail designs reflect each segment's physical and cultural context to weave into existing transportation networks where the new connections are needed most.

Historically, Dunkerton has experienced significant flooding. As a result, the city purchased several properties through FEMA that have been repurposed as green spaces. Storm-water management is a problem along Crane Creek, as well as on the south side of town. Community services such as the library and city hall were rebuilt and are no longer located on Main Street.

Welcome sign and Dunkerton Bridge

These changes have made it more difficult for visitors to navigate the community. The steering committee identified storm-water management and way-finding as priorities for addressing these issues.

The visioning design team incorporated innovative and beautiful storm-water management techniques to address the storm-water management problem holistically. South of Dunkerton, where flooding is usually the most severe, a surface-fed wet detention pond is proposed to store storm water. In areas where the water table is further away from the surface, strategies to capture and infiltrate water include the use of permeable paving, bioswales, and native vegetation with amended soils. These storm-water management practices not only reduce flooding, but also create wildlife habitat and remove pollutants from water.

Measures to improve connectivity and strengthen way-finding devices in Dunkerton are needed to create a landscape that both residents and visitors understand. The design team created a family of way-finding signage to direct visitors to key public destinations such as Charma Park and sites including the relocated city hall and library. Other enhancements proposed include new and safe hardscapes, street-tree plantings, and safety measures that demonstrate “Complete Street” principles throughout the community.

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Zach Pierce
Craig Robinson
Justin Schilling
Jamie Stickfort

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1. *The design team has created way-finding, destination, and interpretive signage of a consistent aesthetic for Dunkerton.*
2. *The proposed trailhead for the Crane Creek Trail uses native vegetation and glacial erratic boulders to reflect the natural history of the community.*
3. *Proposed amenities for the newly constructed Crane Creek Trail segment include trash cans, benches, native vegetation plantings, and lighting that minimizes light pollution.*
4. *After evaluating the natural hydrology of Dunkerton, the design team has recommended a surface-fed wet detention pond south of town to mitigate local flooding and treat storm water.*
5. *This section addresses how a trail and associated amenities can be constructed between cropland and existing drainage ways.*
6. *Utilizing methods of low-impact development on public and private property would minimize the runoff entering local storm drains.*

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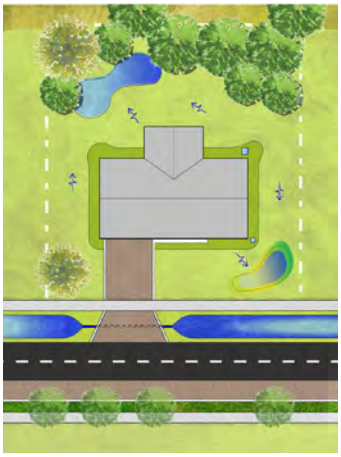

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Elkhart

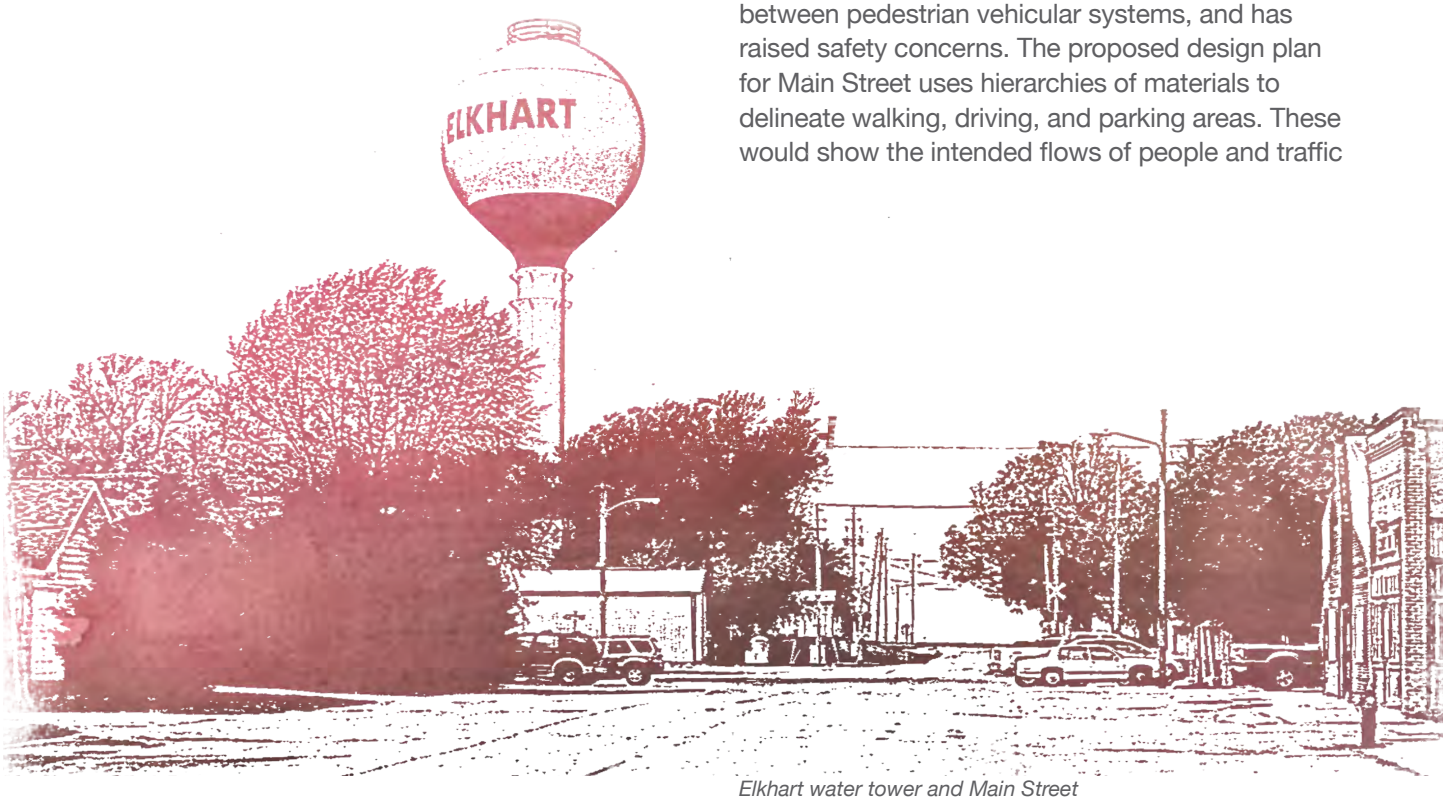
Elkhart is a growing community in Polk County, just east of Interstate 35 and northeast of Ankeny. The city was founded in 1903, a time when the railroad played a larger role in commerce. The still active rail line is considered one of Elkhart's defining features. Since the 2000 census, the population has nearly doubled from 362 to 683.

The town is located along County Road F22 and is bisected by the major north-south corridor, Grant Avenue (NE 46th Street). These heavily traveled roads are farm-to-market routes that divide the community into separate districts. The part of Elkhart west of Grant Avenue, as well as the senior apartments and Faith Church, is known as "Old Town." Residents consider the primarily residential area east of Grant as "New Town." In addition to "Elkhart proper" are three separate districts within city limits: the trailer court to the east, which has existed since the 1970s; the industrial park currently under development to the west; and the truck parking lot, where the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) trains semi drivers.

The Elkhart steering committee identified improving connectivity among the different parts of town as a high priority. The visioning design team developed a concept plan for adding sidewalks or widened asphalt shoulders, starting with connections adjacent to the primary roads—Grant Avenue and Walnut Street. The plan also features walkways connecting Elkhart's parks, and a path from the trailer court to Prairie Pointe Park. In addition to improving connections within the community, there are opportunities for Elkhart to connect to surrounding regional trails.

The design team developed a series of way-finding signage options to create a strong identity and sense of place in Elkhart. Welcome signs along entrance corridors could feature the year of the town's incorporation and graphics emphasizing one of the selected town slogans "The Heart of Iowa." Way-finding signage in town at strategic intersections and along main thoroughfares would direct pedestrians and drivers to major community attractions.

Main Street is the principal artery of "Old Town." Its present condition lack clarity and consistency between pedestrian vehicular systems, and has raised safety concerns. The proposed design plan for Main Street uses hierarchies of materials to delineate walking, driving, and parking areas. These would show the intended flows of people and traffic



Elkhart water tower and Main Street

and minimize confusion and disorderly parking. Street trees and planting beds near residential buildings would make these homes more attractive and desirable places in which to live. The design plan proposes benches, lighting, plantings, and signage consistent stylistically with welcome and way-finding signage.

Because of a high water table and the existing topographical conditions, storm water drains to the northeast region of Elkhart. Many residents report flooding and ponding issues. The storm-water best management practices proposed by the design team would use the current conditions to capture and infiltrate water to reduce the frequency and severity of flooding. The success of these projects is dependent on private and public partnerships and cooperation. Projects include planting native vegetation in existing drainage swales, a bioretention basin, a community rain garden, and storm-water easements to reduce the occurrence of backyard and basement flooding. New green infrastructure practices should be planted with native vegetation appropriate for site conditions.

Trees Forever Facilitator: Dustin Hinrichs
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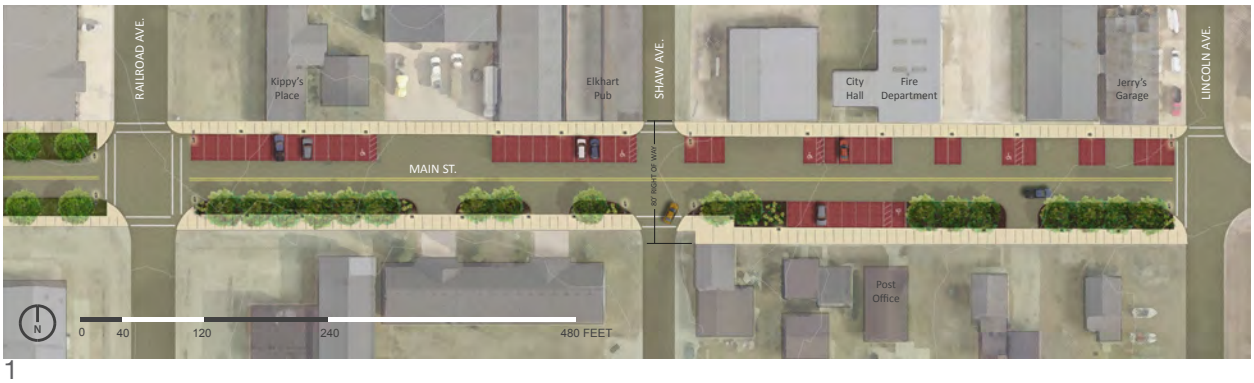
Donna MacNeir
Chris Mathis
Penny Moberly
Kelly Muth
Mitch Muth
Cyndi Ollin
Bob Reinertson
Angie Schaffer
Randy Thompson
Jeanne Uhl



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1. *The design team has created a material palette to delineate zones of travel and parking on Main Street.*
2. *Street plantings and stylized lighting and banners are proposed to make Main Street more memorable.*
3. *A proposed community rain garden would help capture and infiltrate storm water, celebrate native plant communities, and provide wildlife habitat.*
4. *Proposed welcoming and way-finding signage for Elkhart emphasizes the community as the "Heart of Iowa."*
5. *To maximize its visibility and effectiveness, new signage should be placed in strategic locations to welcome and guide visitors to popular destinations.*
6. *This conceptual regional trail design shows an asphalt path and county road separated by a gravel shoulder.*


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WELCOME TO THE
ELKHART
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INCORPORATED 1904

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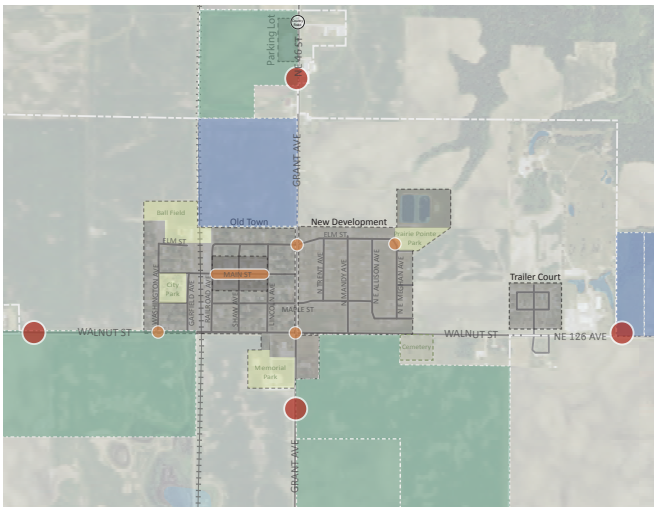
Parking Lot
146 ST
GRANT AVE
Ball Field
Old Town
New Development
ELM ST
Prairie Pointe Park
MAPLE ST
City Park
Trailer Court
WALNUT ST
NE 126 AVE
Cemetery
Memorial Park

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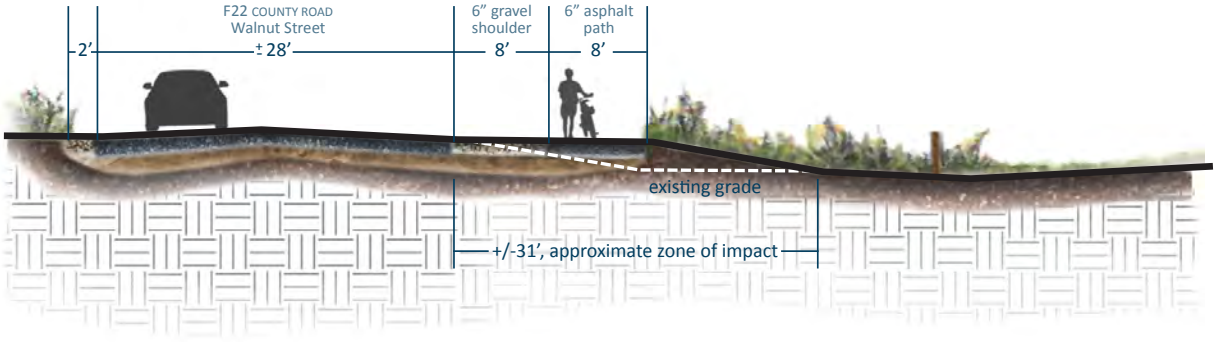
F22 COUNTY ROAD
Walnut Street
2′
± 28′
6″ gravel shoulder
8′
6″ asphalt path
8′
existing grade
+/-31′, approximate zone of impact

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Fairfield

Fairfield is the county seat of Jefferson County and the home of the Maharishi University of Management (MUM). With a population of 9,455, Fairfield is a progressive community known for its efforts to become more sustainable, and walkability and bikability are important to residents. In addition to the 16-mile Fairfield Loop Trail, the city has designated walkways and bikeways throughout town.

Sustainable design is featured throughout Fairfield. For instance, the Abundance Ecovillage just north of city limits is completely "off the grid," as is the MUM Sustainable Living Center, which uses solar and wind power, features an edible landscape, and collects and recycles rainwater. The Sky Factory is powered 100% by solar energy; the company also practices sustainable agriculture. Fairfield residents have access to locally sourced foods through the farmers market held in Howard Park and the Community Orchard in Chautauqua Park.

Fairfield completed the Community Visioning process in 2003, primarily to address the impact of the US Highway 34 bypass. In 2010, the city participated in the Trails Visioning Program, which provided landscape design for the Loop Trail. In keeping with the community's goal of offering exceptional quality of life to its citizens while protecting the environment, the Fairfield steering committee applied to the 2015 Community Visioning Program to find solutions to storm-water management problems, particularly along Burlington Avenue, the primary east-west corridor through town.

The visioning design team addressed storm-water issues along Burlington Avenue with a combination of bioswales, infiltration trenches, bioretention basins, and rain gardens. Proposed designs for the street depict bike lanes, sidewalks, and various types of green infrastructure. The importance of sustainability to Fairfield residents inspired the design team to propose a storm-water management demonstration area on 12th Street and West Jefferson Avenue. The demonstration area shows a "treatment train" in which multiple management practices have been designed in series, allowing runoff to become progressively cleaner as it moves through each component.

Central Park and Square

During the community assessment process, Fairfield residents identified a number of areas in need of improved pedestrian/cyclist accessibility, circulation, and safety. The visioning design team proposed new crosswalks and crossing signals at the intersections of Burlington Avenue and Ninth Street, as well as at West Merrill Avenue and North Fourth Street/Highway 1, where irregular road alignments make crossing confusing. The concept plan also addresses the lack of safe pedestrian access to the Little League Park at North Morgan Street and Burlington Avenue.

The concept plan also incorporates a family of way-finding signage throughout town that reflects Fairfield's identity. A proposed sign, ornamental plantings, street trees, a recreational trail, and pedestrian-scale lighting along Highway 1 would welcome visitors and signal drivers to slow down as they enter town.

Also addressed in the plan are public park improvements. New driving and walking routes, combined with updated plantings, would reduce confusion and enhance the entrance experience at Chautauqua Park. Residents expressed a desire for outdoor dining facilities in Central Park. The proposed design is consistent with the symmetry of the park and is flexible enough as to be utilized in other ways as well. Low walls delineate the eating areas from the rest of the park and provide extra seating as needed.

Trees Forever Facilitator: Hannah Howard
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Faith Reeves
Scott Timm
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1. *A tiered infiltration trench system is proposed to manage storm water near an intersection where green space is limited.*
2. *Enhancements to increase pedestrian access to Little League Park also incorporate storm-water management technologies.*
3. *Proposals for an updated north Highway 1 gateway experience include a vehicular-scale sign and ornamental native vegetation.*
4. *The design team recommended seat walls and site furnishings to create an outdoor eating area in Fairfield's Central Park.*
5. *An ADA-accessible walkway would turn a currently confusing road island into a road crossing asset.*
6. *To shorten the crossing distance across Highway 1, the design team proposed using vegetated storm-water best management practices in unused lane space.*

Nashua

Nashua is situated along the Avenue of the Saints (US Highway 218) in Chickasaw County, just southeast of Charles City. Cedar Lake and the Cedar River dominate the landscape and are popular outdoor venues for residents and tourists. Two miles east of town are the Little Brown Church and the Old Bradford Pioneer Village and Museum.

Despite its small population of 1,663 residents, Nashua is a regional hub of recreational activity, hosting the annual Water Over the Dam Days and the Chickasaw County Big Four Fair. The town is home to the Nashua-Plainfield School District campus, which houses the elementary and high schools, along with the Husky Wellness Center.

Improvements to Nashua's parks were the most highly ranked priority among steering committee members. Cedar View Park currently has campsites, a skate park, sand volleyball court, play equipment, and boating and swimming access to the lake. To even further diversify the recreational amenities in the park, the design team recommended a pool, splash pad, and bathhouse for swimmers and campers. Additional docks and swimming platforms would increase the opportunities to enjoy the water. Improved parking and pedestrian and vehicular circulation would make the park easier to navigate.

The city of Nashua seeks to capitalize on its many recreational opportunities to draw visitors to town and enhance residents' quality of life. The concept plan addresses this concern by proposing that Veterans and Cannon Parks be converted to areas for condominiums, a marina, and a restaurant, making the lakefront more of an economic generator. Veterans Park would be rebuilt on Main Street.

In its application to the Community Visioning Program, the Nashua steering committee described Main Street as unattractive, with one of the "lowest occupancy rates in northeast Iowa." The visioning concept plan for Main Street proposes street trees and bump-outs to green the street and provide shade in the walk to Veterans Park, which would be relocated to the lot next to the post office. Other Main Street beautification strategies include painting street poles black and installing hanging planters and banners unique to Nashua. The Nashua steering committee would also like to use existing concrete piers at the north

end of Main Street to build pedestrian bridge to connect the downtown area with the proposed economic development areas.

Improved signage of a unified graphic identity throughout the community would help visitors discover Nashua's many attractions. The proposed way-finding palette addresses pedestrian and vehicular scales, and it is consistent with existing street signs and Nashua-Plainfield High School colors. A new sign at the Welcome Center with vegetation, as well as new plantings around the two existing welcome signs, reflect positively on the town.

The safe and accessible walking routes were another top priority addressed in the concept plan for Nashua. At heavily used intersections, particularly those on common walking routes to schools, safety enhancements such as crosswalks, flashing lights, and center-line yield signs are recommended. Additionally, a scenic trail route creates a safe route for cyclists and pedestrians to destinations such as the Little Brown Church and the Old Bradford Pioneer Village.

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Corwin Dunlap
Tammy Evans
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Toni Hinrichs
Juanita Johnson
Val Johnson
Tyler Lantz
Mark Moine
Casey Neuhaus
Megan Swick
Mekenna Weiss

Cedar Lake and Lakeshore Trail

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1. *The design team proposed moving an improved Veterans Park next to the post office on Main Street to increase its use and appreciation.*
2. *Gateway enhancements include a native vegetation palette and a nearby connecting trail.*
3. *Proposed economic development projects include lakeside condominiums, a pedestrian bridge, and a restaurant/marina complex.*
4. *An amphitheater and improved skate park are among the amenities proposed for Cedar View Park.*
5. *Enhanced crosswalks and signage at the intersection shown would make a popular walking route to school pedestrian-friendly.*
6. *Nashua's way-finding signage family (shown to scale in images 1 and 5) celebrates Cedar Lake's beauty and recreational opportunities.*

Onawa

Onawa is west of the Loess Hills, between the Little Sioux River and the Missouri River on Highway 175. Originally developed on the rail line, Onawa now serves as the “Gateway to the Loess Hills” for people exiting from Interstate 29 just west of town.

Onawa is surrounded by opportunities for outdoor recreation, including the Lewis and Clark State Park, the Blue Lake KOA Campground, and the Middle Decatur Bend Wildlife State Park to the west, and within city limits the Monona County Arboretum and Gramm Wetland. The community assessments conducted during the visioning process revealed that residents of Onawa want pedestrian and cyclist trails to these and other popular destinations in the area.

The visioning concept plan features local and regional trail connections. To connect regional destinations, the design team proposed paved shoulders along Highway 175 and County Road L12. Within town, the trail plan calls for trailheads with amenities such as seating and way-finding maps at Gaukel Park, Gramm Wetland, near the high school, and downtown. In-town trails are a mix of shared roadways, wider sidewalks, and separate trail segments. Proposed changes for Onawa’s downtown and the existing Gramm Wetland trail are part of the larger plan.

Onawa is flat topographically, and storm water tends to pool on impervious surfaces for extended periods of time after a rain event. To mitigate these conditions, the design team proposed three different best management practices to capture and infiltrate water: polishing forebays, bioinfiltration trenches, and surface treatment in the form of a bioswale. Trees in Onawa’s downtown core area are an integral part of the plan because of the large amounts of water that they intercept. Downtown Onawa lacks street trees and much of the tree canopy consists of ash trees. Investment in a holistic tree plan for downtown creates a visual identity for the area along with the many environmental and economic benefits of street trees.

Iowa Avenue is the widest main street in the United States. Its four lanes of traffic and two frontage roads raise safety concerns and the vast swath of impermeable pavement contributes to Onawa's flooding issues. The design team developed an attractive, functional plan for the street featuring four rows of trees, angled parking, bike lanes, and several vehicular lanes. The trees would provide wildlife habitat and shade, mitigate flooding, and increase nearby property values. The proposed site furnishings and way-finding signage are inspired by the Prairie Style architecture of Onawa's Public Library. In addition to Iowa Avenue, the design team has identified priority areas throughout the community. Railroad crossings, curbs and ramps, and new or widened sidewalks are some of the design interventions that would improve safety and increase community walkability.

Most people enter Onawa from Highway 175, and are greeted by welcoming signage. The steering committee would like similar signage at the north and south entrances into town on County Road K45.

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Intern: Rachel Anderson

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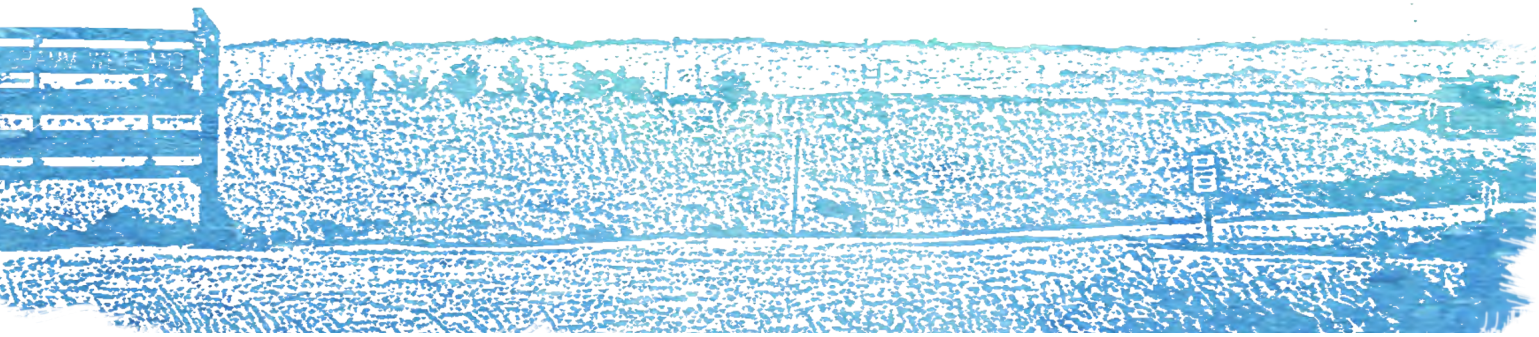
Ethan Hanson
Geri Hoffman
Joyce Mann
Teresa Miller
Ralph Skarin
Bill Wonder



Onawa Public Library and Gramm Wetland and trail

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1. *The problematic intersection at Iowa Avenue and 10th Street would be enhanced by vegetation, lighting, easy-to-see crosswalks, and widened sidewalks.*
2. *The design proposals for the widest main street in the United States allow for four rows of trees and multiple modes of transportation.*
3. *Proposed entry signage and appropriate plantings would welcome people to Onawa, the Monona County seat.*
4. *A variety of best management practices are proposed for Onawa, including the bioretention basin shown.*

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Osage

Osage is located along both State Highway 9 and US Highway 218 and just east of the Cedar River. This community of 3,619 residents is the county seat of Mitchell County in the northernmost part of the state. In the late 1800s, the city's forefathers lined the streets with maple trees and named the east-west streets after a variety of trees; hence, Osage is known as the "City of Maples."

Osage's Main Street is a hub of commercial and community activity and a point of pride among residents. In 2002, the State Historical Society of Iowa designated a three-block area on Main Street as the "Osage Commercial Historic District." The Osage steering committee determined that the street should be more accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and persons with physical disabilities. The visioning concept plan proposes changing the existing four-lane street to three lanes, including a center turning lane; the extra road space could then be converted to bike lanes. In addition, sidewalks would be widened and intersection crossings would be made ADA-accessible. The current ginkgo street trees have unfortunately not lived as long as desired; the concept plan recommends new street trees and perennial species planted within tree pits larger than standard tree grates. Way-finding elements and other amenities for Main Street would reflect the character of the custom furnishings and signage already in place.

Osage residents have access to a number of recreational opportunities. Several parks are located within city limits, as well as the community/recreation center—Cedar River Complex—and a short walking trail near the senior living area. Just west of town along the Cedar River are the Mitchell County Conservation Center and the Falk Wildlife Area. People swim and fish in the Cedar River. Spring Park, a favorite among residents, is also adjacent to the river and is connected to Osage by the Harry Cook Nature Trail. The Cedar River Greenbelt Trail is a four-mile limestone trail that connects the Falk Wildlife Area with Interstate Park in Mitchell.

Spring Park is a heavily used, significant community asset, as shown in the results of the transportation survey of residents. The visioning committee decided that certain aspects of the site need refurbishing. The visioning concept plan includes a

Welcome sign and Mitchell County Courthouse

limestone bank restoration and new seating around the spring to highlight the feature for which the park was named. Similar limestone seating is proposed near a canoe and kayak access on the Cedar River. RV and yurt camping sites are also proposed. On the Harry Cook Nature Trail, areas that experience flooding would be improved through the construction of a raised boardwalk.

Community assessments conducted during the visioning process revealed that residents would like more trails in town and a loop that connects to other trails such as the Cedar River Greenbelt. The visioning design team developed a trail plan for Osage featuring a mix of off-street trails, sidewalk connections, and shared roadways. The trail system would create a loop around the city with connections to the golf course and the conservation center. A trail is proposed to link Spring Park with the Cedar River Greenbelt Trail, connecting Osage with Mitchell and eventually St. Ansgar.

In addition to increasing the trail network around Osage, the steering committee would like to connect the most frequently used areas in town. The southern and eastern parts of town are top priorities because the commercial district, soccer fields, and high school are located in these areas. As with the regional trails, the trail system in town would include off-street trails, sidewalks, and shared roadways. For areas with heavy traffic, the design team recommended a new trail system that would require coordination with private landowners.

Trees Forever Facilitator: Meredith Borchardt
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Del Gast
Wendy Heuton
Tyler Randall
Julia Ringhofer
Judy Voaklander
Laura Wynohrad

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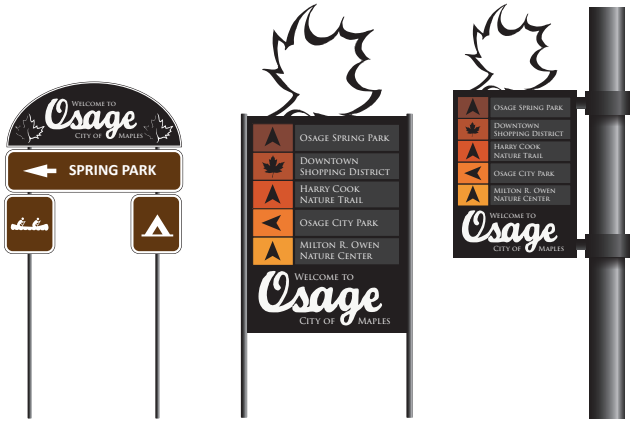

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1. *Spring Park is a popular spot for recreation; design proposals seek to improve pedestrian and canoe access through a unifying material palette.*
2. *The design team has proposed multiple ways to convert Main Street´s four lanes into three with the addition of a bike lane and increased vegetation.*
3. *“Share the Road” signage and pavement markings expand cyclist recreational options even when space does not permit the construction of entirely new trails.*
4. *Proposed signage would direct visitors and residents to well-known destinations through a legible and cohesive way-finding element family.*
5. *Crosswalks, warning signage, and ADA-compliant curbs would make Osage a more walkable community.*

Riceville

Riceville is situated on the Howard/Mitchell county line along State Highway 9. The Wapsipinicon River runs along the west side of town. The Wapsi-Great Western Line Trail starts in downtown Riceville, running north to the state line. Eventually the trail will connect with the Shooting Star State Trail in Minnesota.

This community of less than 800 residents had already made a number of improvements to town prior to participating in the visioning program, focusing primarily on the Highway 9 corridor. The farmers market, the gazebo and Veterans Park, the Wapsi-Great Western Line trailhead, the welcome center, and a new entrance sign are the fruits of the labor of the city, the Riceville Community Club, and the Riceville Wapsi-Great Line Western Trail Committee. The city is working closely with the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative of Howard County to ensure that residents have opportunities for physical activity as well as healthy food choices.

Riceville residents are proud of their local history, which includes two historic landmarks side by side on Main Street—the site of the old brick kiln is a piece of history left behind by the railroad. West of the kiln is the welcome center and trailhead. Originally the First Baptist Church, the welcome center was constructed in 1868 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The original backdrops from the Brown Opera have been restored and are housed in the Riceville Public Library community room.

Creating an identity for the downtown district is one of the Riceville steering committee's priorities. The visioning design team proposed way-finding signage, new lighting fixtures, and decorative pavement along Main Street. The concept plan also features a pocket park in an existing vacant lot and adds amenities to existing parks. Along Main Street and Woodland Avenue, vegetated bump-outs at crosswalks would shorten the pedestrian crossing distance and increase green space.

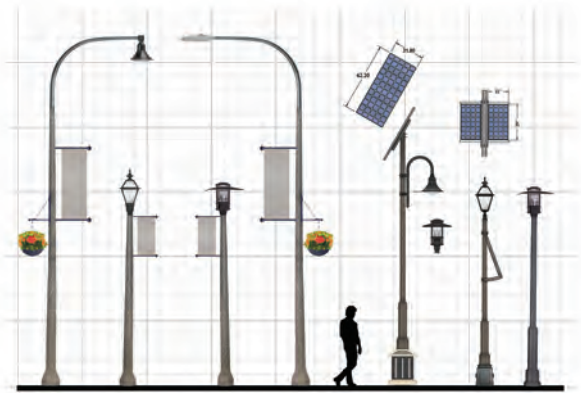
Lake Hendricks

Woodland Avenue is a key commercial corridor through town. The steering committee identified enhancements to Woodland as priorities early in the visioning process. Currently there are issues with water pooling under parked cars. The proposed design conveys runoff away from parking and driving areas, collecting water along the curb instead. Proposals use a variety of materials to distinguish between the road, parallel parking areas, and the sidewalk. Improved sidewalks in this area would provide safer access to nearby businesses, services, and gathering spaces. The part of Woodland in the business district would feature streetscape amenities matching those proposed for Main Street.

Improved lighting is of great concern in Riceville, particularly on Main Street, Woodland Avenue, and 2nd Street. The design team recommended a palette of lighting options and specifications for both vehicular and pedestrian scales at these locations. Lighting is also needed to increase safety and comfort on the Wapsi-Great Western Trail and the bridge west of Riceville on Highway 9 that spans the Wapsipinicon River. The designs blend with existing lighting and stylistically reflect their surroundings. The design team prepared a lighting plan identifying areas of greatest need and recommended spacing for different light fixture scales. The chosen locations address recreational amenities, a community gateway, and overall sense of place in Riceville's downtown.

Trees Forever Facilitator: Patty Reisinger
Landscape Architects: Dylan Jones and Casey Byers
Interns: Emily Scott and Amy Larrance

Steering Committee:
Betty Borchardt
Terry Byrnes
Bailey Dohlman
Madison Drilling
Deanna Eastman
Dana Fister
Elaine Govern
Jim Green
Harold Jensen
Nicholas Jensen
Casandra Leff
Jordan Oulman
Darlene Seidel
Ken Smith
Teresa Smith



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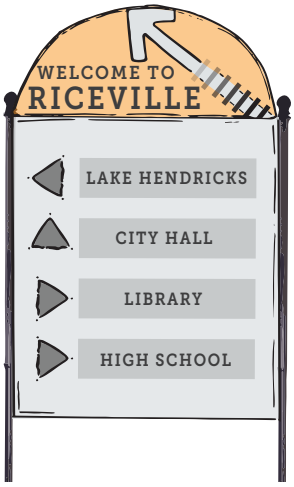

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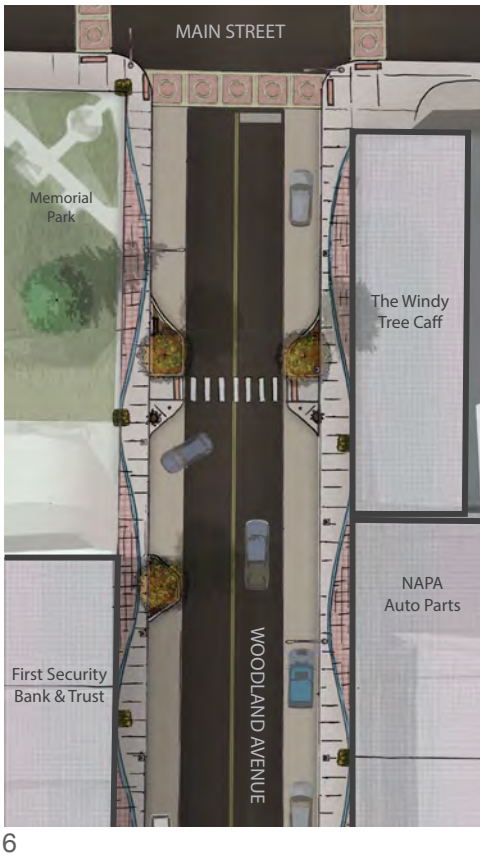

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1. *The proposed lighting palette includes a variety of options that would better serve Riceville's visibility needs.*
2. *Pedestrian-scale lighting on the Wapsi-Great Western Line Trail would help guide recreation during early morning or evening hours.*
3. *A vacant lot on Main Street has the potential to be transformed into a welcoming pocket park.*
4. *Proposed streetscape features on Main Street emphasize the community's history and show the priorities of safety and walkability.*
5. *The way-finding and signage family showcase Riceville's geologic and industrial history.*
6. *The design for Woodland Avenue maintains a hierarchy between parking, vehicular travel, storm-water management, sidewalks, and crosswalks.*

Ringsted

Ringsted is located just west of the intersection of State Highway 15 and County Road A34 in southeast Emmet County in northern Iowa. The town is named for Ringsted, Denmark, the home of an early settler. Ringsted's 422 residents take pride in their Danish Heritage, which is reflected in the mermaid statue reminiscent of a statue in Copenhagen located next to the Legion Hall, as well as in the community entrance signage.

The heart of Ringsted is the downtown area, which encompasses many local businesses, as well as Railroad Park, a popular gathering space with a playground, a shelter house, and a mature tree canopy. The Ringsted steering community ranked improvements to the park as its highest priority during the visioning process. The visioning design team proposed the addition of a bus shelter, improved signage and lighting, sidewalk games, and a trail to make the park more accessible to all residents. Because many of Railroad Park's trees are ashes, the design plan also incorporates new tree plantings to maintain the benefit of shade. Crosswalks around Railroad Park link it to West Maple Street, Ringsted's "Main Street"; Heritage Street; and the rest of town.

The T-ball field recently built at the site of the former elementary school has the potential to become an important community and recreational space. Recommended improvements include tree plantings to provide shade for spectators and players, a permanent concession stand, and crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian access to the field. A small soccer field partially overlapping the T-ball field would add to the park's versatility.

Gazebo

Although Ringsted is already fairly walkable, the design team recommended adding crosswalks near the T-ball field to accommodate the anticipated increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic around the new amenities.

Ringsted residents expressed a desire to highlight and celebrate the town's Danish heritage. Events such as the Little Miss Mermaid Pageant capture this unique connection. In the visioning design plan, the mermaid statue is elevated to the top of a large rock surrounded by low growing vegetation, making it more visible. Additional proposals to beautify the main street while emphasizing Ringsted's roots include Danish-themed banners, murals, and architectural details; painted streetlight poles; and annual planters and hanging baskets.

The east and west entrances into Ringsted along A34 provide opportunities to welcome residents and visitors. The existing signs feature Danish details, the community name, and the phrase "A small town with big ideas" in silhouette. While captivating, the signs are difficult to read, particularly from a moving vehicle, because they lack a proper backdrop. A light-colored background behind the silhouette and night lighting would increase the signs' visibility, and native plantings around the signs would beautify the landscape and create prominent entrance features. Alternatively, the concept plan proposes a sign made from a large boulder featuring a replica of the iconic mermaid statue.

Trees Forever Facilitator: Jeff Jensen
Landscape Architect: Craig Ritland and Samantha Price
Intern: Katherine Gould

Steering Committee:
Athlyn Black
Barb Christensen
Tom Garman
Sylvia Hansen
Wiley Hanson
Roger Jensen
Dan Jorgenson
Julie Ladig
Amy Larson
Anita Larson
Nick Larson
Diane Michalec
Sommer Nielsen
Travis Nielsen
Kathy Pudenz
Cathy Wikert

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1. *Design proposals include enhancements to the pedestrian transportation network in and around Railroad Park.*
2. *Gateway enhancements are proposed to make existing Ringsted welcome signage more visible and inviting during all times of the day.*
3. *To create a stronger identity, design proposals for downtown include details to emphasize Ringsted's Danish heritage.*
4. *The design team proposed ways to make the Little Mermaid statue near the gazebo more noticeable and celebrated.*
5. *Improved amenities, safety measures, and street trees would make the new T-ball field more suited for community recreation.*

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Vail

Vail is a community of 436 residents along US Highway 30 in Crawford County. Most of the development in the community is north of US 30. The rail line for the Union Pacific Railroad is south of and runs parallel to the highway, averaging 60–65 trains per day.

The visual landscape for which Vail is known is the enormous grain elevator at the west end of the city along US 30. However, the elevator fails to reflect the town's identity. One of the Vail steering committee's priorities is to create a unique identity for the community that is visually reflected in the landscape along US 30.

The visioning design team developed an entrance corridor plan for US 30 that includes entry signage in a planting bed and a welcoming mural painted on the grain elevator. In addition, digital scrolling signs would communicate upcoming community events and news. Beyond the use of signage, vegetation such as prairie seeding, street trees, and planted curb extensions would signal drivers to slow down as they enter town. These areas also filter and infiltrate storm water, create shade, and beautify the street. Highway 30 is also valued and memorable because of its historic buildings. Selective building facade updates, benches, and lighting would help to make the space more inviting.

Since the demolition of a building on the corner of Bergen Street and Highway 30, there has been interest in converting the space into a pocket park. The proposed design includes a brick obelisk that memorializes Vail's war veterans and simultaneously celebrates the town's brick manufacturing history. Through a mix of hardscape and vegetation, the park would be appropriate for community events as well as personal and small group enjoyment. In addition to possible grant funding, the construction and maintenance of the pocket park could be funded through the sale of personally dedicated design elements such as benches, trees, and plaques that fit the park's concept and connect individuals to the space.

Saint Ann Catholic Church and Vail sign

The public park on the north end of Main Street, while already a popular destination for residents, could use updates to increase its connectivity and to make it aesthetically consistent with the proposed changes the US 30 corridor. These include enhanced lighting, a network of green infrastructure techniques, improved street crossings, and updated facilities and equipment. There is a trail connection into the park via the 5th Street bridge; however, it is not wide enough to accommodate emergency vehicles. The reconstruction of this bridge is a high priority.

A number of Vail residents walk and bike daily; however, the lack of a proper sidewalk system forces people to walk and ride in the street or on the highway shoulder. The visioning design team developed a trail loop around town using wider sidewalks and some separate trails to link popular destinations. The trail incorporates Beer Can Alley, an old trail that is a remnant of Vail's history that is named for two pubs in Des Moines and Okoboji. The design team also created a plan for regional trail connections that incorporate existing trails, potential rails to trails, and bike lanes along the highway shoulder. Within the city grid, the concept plan addresses infrastructure issues with improvements to lighting, sidewalks, and drainage systems. The plan also includes curb ramps, stop signs, and other pedestrian safety devices.

Trees Forever Facilitator: Brad Riphagen
Landscape Architects: David Stokes, Eric Doll, and Spencer Sneller
Intern: Rachel Anderson

Steering Committee:
Hunter Allen
Jaclyn Allen
Ainsley Brungardt
Kurt Brungardt
Peyton Brungardt
Alyssa Buren
Donna Buren
Jacki Gallagher
Dan Gangested
Rachel Gangested
Jace Hawley
Russ Hawley
Wendy Hawley
Toni Jepsen
Kariyn Kinney
Marc Kinney
Mike Leahy
Kathy Ruch
Jason Towne
Julie Towne
Robbin Weier

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1. *Designs for a pocket park include a veterans memorial, fund-raising pavers, and additional vegetation for shade.*
2. *A proposed mural on a landmark elevator and digital scrolling sign communicate Vail's identity to those in and near the community.*
3. *Areas north of Vail have sufficient space to provide new recreation opportunities through parallel ATV and multiuse trails.*
4. *The design team has proposed ways to make the community park even more valued, including investing in green infrastructure, an improved bridge, crosswalks, lighting, trail connections, and more.*
5. *The new design for Main Street utilizes curb cuts to direct water into verge plantings.*

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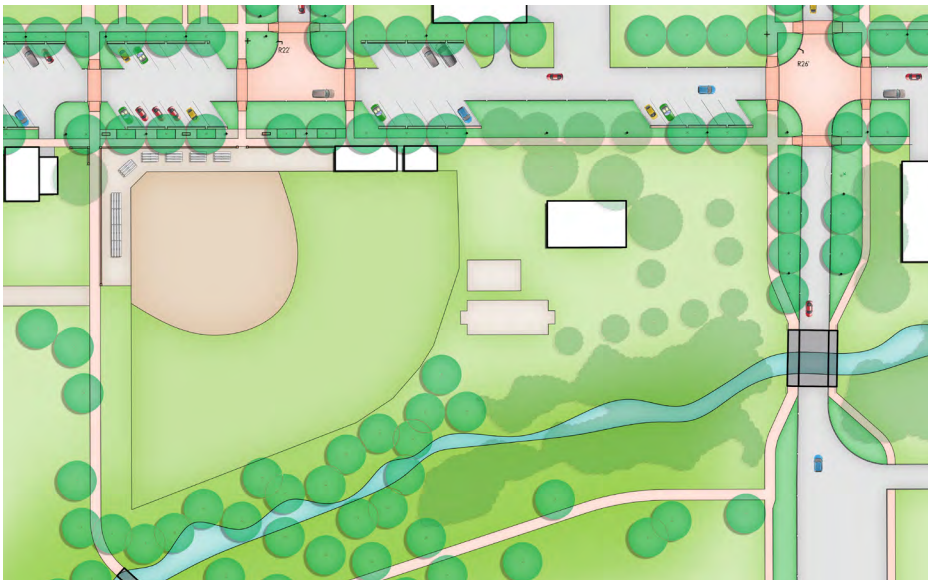

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People

Interns

Rachel Anderson

Rachel Anderson is a landscape designer and horticulturalist from Omaha, Nebraska. She is currently pursuing a master of landscape architecture degree at Iowa State University to increase and enhance her expertise in urban ecology and green infrastructure. Rachel's internship with Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company afforded her a wonderful learning opportunity to interact with landscape architecture professionals, city officials, and community residents, and to exercise innovative design solutions.

Jessica Adiwijaya

Jessica graduated in May 2015 from Iowa State with a bachelor of landscape architecture. Growing up in the urban environment of Jakarta, Indonesia, increased her curiosity about how nature and sustainable design shape urban cities, which in turn led her to landscape architecture. Jessica joined the Community Visioning team in fall 2014. She has been involved in bioregional analysis, community workshop assessments, and community analysis of assets and barriers. She is enjoying her time working on community visioning and sees it as a learning tool to better understand sustainable community design. She hopes that in her future career she will have opportunities to work in community design and citizen engagement.

Sara Davids

Sara is a fifth-year landscape architecture student at Iowa State University and will graduate in May 2016. She enjoys studying landscape architecture for its opportunities to design meaningful places for a wide variety of needs. Studying abroad this past spring, she worked with several culturally diverse neighborhoods and gained experience working with community identities. As an intern with RDG Planning & Design, she had the chance to work with the town of Bondurant and help residents create plans for their community's enhancements. Her favorite part of the visioning process is discussing the community members' ideas and wishes, then bringing those concepts to life.

Colby Fangman

Colby earned a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Iowa State University in 2012, and he is now pursuing a master's degree in interdisciplinary graduate studies. His interdisciplinary studies focus on geographic information systems and visual communications. Colby joined Flenker Land Architecture Consultants as an intern to pursue his passion for urban and rural storm-water management systems. Over the summer, he took an active role in the open-space planning and storm-water management conceptual design processes for the communities of Dunkerton and Fairfield. As a native of rural northeast Iowa, he understands the importance of, and is proud to take part in, design outreach for small Iowa communities.

Richard Garcia

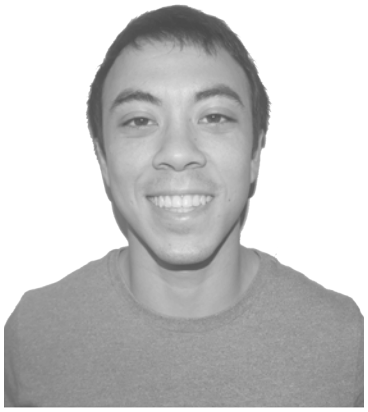
Richard is a fourth-year student in Iowa State University's landscape architecture program. He was born in Aurora, Illinois, and spent most of his life in the western suburbs of Chicago. His love for the outdoors was acquired during frequent summer trips to visit family in Mexico and through living an active outdoor lifestyle. With the craft of design in mind, sustainability led him to landscape architecture, where he found the best of both worlds. Richard enjoyed being able to connect to community members, hearing their stories and what potential they see in their small towns. He assisted with community survey data collection, as well as mapping workshops. Richard hopes to apply all these skills to his future career.

Katherine Gould

Katherine is a fifth-year student who will graduate from Iowa State University in May 2016 with a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture and a Spanish minor. Her love of the outdoors and design introduced her to the field of landscape architecture, and she continues to develop a passion for learning about issues of environmental equity and social justice. During her second year participating in the Community Visioning Program, she interned for RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects. Her work included digital graphics production and presentation of project concepts for Nashua and Ringsted. Her favorite aspect of the summer's work was collaborating with residents to learn how design projects would positively impact their communities.

Evan Kay

Evan was born and raised in Des Moines, IA. He is a fourth-year landscape architecture student set to graduate in the spring 2017. He is involved in the Student Society of Landscape Architecture as both a student representative to ASLA and a recycling chair. His passion for landscape architecture stems from his interests in urban design and a lifelong affection for nature. He is also passionate about the psychology and theory behind what makes design successful. These passions are what led him to Community Visioning, where he started in the spring 2015. Evan is excited about the opportunity to meet new people in Iowa communities and work with them to give them the tools they need to make their community more successful.



Kevin Kinney

Born in Bangkok and raised in the Quad Cities, Kevin is a fourth-year landscape architecture student at Iowa State University. He began working with Community Visioning in spring 2015, assisting with community assessment workshops, case studies, and product development. Kevin's interest in landscape architecture stems from his love of the outdoors and active recreation. He has a passion for ecology and urban design. Kevin believes that landscape architecture plays a crucial role in the health and well-being of each individual as well as the environment. He loves how the Community Visioning Program helps small towns foster a stronger sense of community, while promoting health and recreation in an equitable way.

Amy Larrance

Amy is a fifth-year student of landscape architecture at Iowa State University. Her love of nature and design drove her to pursue landscape architecture. She believes landscape architecture has a huge potential that many people don't initially see, and that sustainability and conservation are two of the most important aspects of design. Originally from small-town Iowa herself, she enjoyed being able to work with the communities of Osage and Riceville. Her favorite part of the visioning process was getting to know the personalities and histories of the towns and having community members participate in the design process.

Anh Le

Growing up in Hanoi, Vietnam, Anh earned a bachelor's degree in architecture in 2012. She then attended a two-year master's program in sustainable architecture in multiscale projects at Politecnico di Milano, Italy, during which she became interested in investigating the complexity of the relationships among people, nature, and urban contexts in design. For this reason, she decided to continue her study in landscape architecture at Iowa State University. Ahn has been working for Community Visioning since fall 2014, concentrating on interpreting and visualizing the local geography of communities. This work helped her understand the effects of psychological factors on sustainable urban planning.

Nuo Man

Nuo Man is a third-year graduate student of landscape architecture at Iowa State University. She is from Inner Mongolia, China, and graduated from China Nanjing Forestry University with a bachelor's degree in urban landscape design. Nuo joined the ISU Community Visioning research team in April 2015, assisting with graphic production. As she became familiar with the visioning process, her favorite part was the process of working with the community residents to map their home.

Fangzhou Miao

Miao is a third-year graduate student of landscape architecture at Iowa State University. He earned his bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Inner Mongolia Agricultural University in 2013. He decided to study abroad to gain a better understanding of sustainable landscape design. Miao began working with Community Visioning in spring 2014. He is now a crucial member of the visioning team. He helped to create the bioregional inventory as a new program for visioning in 2015. He loves the way that the Community Visioning Program helps communities to improve their daily living space, as well as their social bonds among each other.

Emily Scott

Emily is a fourth-year student pursuing a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture and minor in sustainability at Iowa State University. This summer she interned with Bolton & Menk, Inc. and was actively involved with the Community Visioning Program working with the communities of Elkhart and Riceville. She is passionate about the impact landscape architecture has on the environment and society and strongly believes in the benefits of designing healthy, functional, living environments. Through this experience, she has enjoyed the opportunity to work directly with the community members and see their passion as the team worked to achieve their vision. As she continues to expand her knowledge in the profession, Emily is looking forward to seeing the impact her work continues to have in the field.

Zihao Wang

Hao is a fourth-year landscape architecture undergraduate student at Iowa State University. He is from Wuhan, the city in China with the most bridges. Hao became a member of the Iowa State University Community Visioning research program in spring 2015. As landscape architect, his career goal is to use both landscape architecture and architecture solutions to improve people's lives and the condition of the environment in his hometown. Hao's main focus for the visioning program was data collection; he believes that data is the most reliable friend and that it always tells the truth. He likes the way the visioning program studies the conditions and needs of communities and wishes to apply this knowledge in his future designs.

Lanxi Zhang

Lanxi is finishing her second year at Washington University in St. Louis where she is majoring in landscape architecture. She earned a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture in Southeast University, Nanjing, in 2012. Her interest in landscape planning within an urban context began during the fall semester of 2014 when she decided to pursue a dual degree in urban design. As a current student, Lanxi joined Flenker Land Architecture Consultants as an intern in the summer to gain practical experience in both landscape and urban design. And as an international student, she obtained a thorough understanding of local culture, urban and rural issues, and policies of Iowa over the summer.

Practitioners

Casey Byers

Casey has experience in both design and construction and has been working as a landscape architect since 2006. He specializes in community master planning, streetscape improvements, gateway feature conceptualization, 3D modeling, and detailed site design. His work includes several award-winning projects in Colorado and the Midwest, most notably a complete streetscape redesign for a major thoroughfare in St. Louis and the master plan for a community in Carmel, Indiana. His involvement in community engagement and preparation of graphics and construction documents have led to successful implementation of many community-backed projects. He is particularly interested in combining sustainability with functionality and helping clients realize their visions through a thorough design process and attainable results.

Eric Doll

Eric has been practicing landscape architecture with Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company for more than three years and has been involved with the Community Visioning Program for seven years. Born and raised in Des Moines, Eric currently operates the JBC Iowa Office located in historic Valley Junction, West Des Moines. Eric earned his BLA from Iowa State University in 2012 with a minor in horticulture and an emphasis on soil science. His unique travel experiences and passion for art and plants brings creativity and passion to the Community Visioning Program. When not spending time working, Eric enjoys spending time with his family and friends, bike riding, playing disc golf, cooking, being outdoors, and occasionally juggling and unicycling.

Meg Flenker

Meg is a licensed landscape architect with more than 25 years of professional experience in providing services to both the public and private sectors. A graduate of the Iowa State University landscape architecture program and the University of Iowa MBA program, Meg established Flenker Land Architecture Consultants LLC (FLAC) in 1997. Meg has proudly participated in the Visioning Program for more than 13 years, and enjoys working with rural Iowa communities. Most recently, Meg was part of the project design team for the City of Parkersburg, Iowa, on a two-mile streetscape renovation of its main highway corridor which will be completed this year—a project vision that she helped Parkersburg create during their 2009 participation in the Visioning Program.

Amber Gable

Amber graduated from Iowa State University in May 2014 with a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture and a minor in horticulture. Amber joined the team at Bolton & Menk and became involved in the Community Visioning Program last year, working in the communities of Hanlontown and Huxley. She looks forward to sharing her problem-solving skills and knowledge of sustainable landscapes with community members to help them grow their own understanding and achieve their goals of community development. When not at work, Amber enjoys being outdoors, traveling the country in search of the best backcountry campsite, and spending time with family and friends.

Dylan Jones

Dylan is part of the landscape architecture staff at Bolton & Menk, Inc. He first interned for the Visioning Program in 2007, and has been involved as a practitioner since 2011. Having grown up in a town that benefited from visioning and successfully implemented some of its projects, Dylan understands the need for the program and can relate to the rural Iowa communities seeking support. He is a passionate designer who gets joy from the relationships formed and lives affected through visioning. Over the last four years, Dylan has been primarily responsible for developing design and presentation graphics and advancing construction documents for streetscapes, parks, and projects for municipalities and universities throughout Iowa. He is currently pursuing licensure.

Bruce Niedermyer

Bruce is a landscape architect and a LEED Accredited professional with RDG Planning and Design. He has gained valuable experience with a wide range of project types including open space planning, park design, campus planning, and streetscape revitalization efforts. Bruce was involved with the Community Visioning process as a student intern while attending Iowa State University and gained valuable experience assisting multiple communities through this design process. Throughout his work, he continuously incorporates sustainable principles in all stages of design. Bruce is passionate about collaborating with design professionals as well as user groups to create a successful final product.

Samantha Price

Samantha first joined RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects as an intern in 2009 through the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program. Her strong work ethic, positive attitude, and adept computer skills led to her joining the RKLA team upon her graduation from Iowa State University. She has become an invaluable asset to RKLA as she continues help coordinate projects and develops outstanding graphics for our clients. Samantha enjoys the delight the visioning committees have when they see their ideas brought to life through computer and hand graphics. She has now gained several years of professional experience and is pursuing her professional license as a landscape architect.

Craig Ritland

Craig earned his degree in landscape architecture from Iowa State University in 1965 and established Craig Ritland Landscape Architects in 1970 in Waterloo. He is best known for his accomplishments in natural resource and cultural preservation of public lands. Craig was named a Fellow by the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2002. Some of his projects have included the Cedar Valley Lakes and Nature Trail projects, a master plan for George Wyth State Park, and downtown Waterloo River Loop projects. In 2013, Craig added Mark Kuiper as a partner to form RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects. He has participated in visioning every year since 1996 and enjoys relating to the rural public and native Iowa landscapes of the communities he serves.

David Stokes

A graduate of Iowa State University's landscape architecture program, David is a senior landscape architect with 16 years of experience in urban design; landscape design; comprehensive master planning; and parks, trails, and greenways planning/ design. He has significant experience facilitating public input and stakeholder meetings, cultural/environmental assessments, biological assessments, and GIS-related planning and analyses. Since joining Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company, David has worked extensively on integrated systems involving living architecture, green roofs, green infrastructure design, urban agronomic design, storm-water BMP and comprehensive drainage solutions, integrated water management, and net-zero water design for public and private sector clients.

Trees Forever

Carl Barnhart

Carl joined Trees Forever in 2014 and serves as the roadways manager. He is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa, where he earned a bachelor's degree in public relations with a minor in journalism. Carl enjoys being a part of the Iowa's Living Roadways team and is excited to get the opportunity to work with Iowa communities to make enhancements to this great state. Carl has a passion for the outdoors and likes to spend time kayaking, fishing, and biking throughout the state.

Leslie Berckes

In her role at Trees Forever, Leslie serves as a program manager and field coordinator for the central Iowa region, working with volunteers and organizations on projects such as tree plantings, tree-care education, native prairie plantings, and more. Leslie enjoys sharing information on the programs that Trees Forever offers and helping Iowa towns take advantage of these programs to make their communities vibrant places to live. This year she facilitated the visioning process in Bondurant.

Meredith Borchardt

Meredith Borchardt is a field coordinator working with volunteers in northeast Iowa through many different Trees Forever programs and is a program manager for several community forestry programs. She and her husband and two children live outside of Clarksville. She graduated from Luther College with a double major of biology and religion. She later earned a master's of science degree from Iowa State University in botany, doing a research project on the effects of mowing and fertilization on diversity in a new prairie reconstruction.

Dustin Hinrichs

Dustin Hinrichs works in Trees Forever's main office in Marion, Iowa. His focus area is primarily Linn County and other areas of eastern Iowa. He has a master's degree in political science from Western Illinois University and a bachelor's degree in biology and environmental health from Iowa Wesleyan College. Dustin joined the Community Visioning Team in 2012. This year Dustin facilitated the visioning process in Elkhart.

Hannah Howard

Hannah is Trees Forever's southeast Iowa field coordinator. She is passionate about trees (of course) and helping connect people to the natural world. Hannah graduated from Iowa State University with degrees in forestry and animal ecology with an emphasis in forest ecosystem management and interpretation of natural resources. She loves traveling and doing anything outdoors from camping to hiking and biking. This year Hannah facilitated the visioning process In Fairfield.

Jeff Jensen

Jeff is Trees Forever's field coordinator for northwest Iowa and program manager for Trees Forever's water quality program, Working Watersheds: Buffers and Beyond. Jeff lives on his family's farm in northern Kossuth County near Fenton and has a passion for agriculture and alternative crops, particularly hazelnuts. Jeff's background also includes work with growers on a range of local foods issues such as food-safety plans, value-added processing, marketing, and business planning. This year, Jeff facilitated the visioning process in Ringsted.

Patty Reisinger

Patty has a bachelor's degree in horticulture from Iowa State University and has been with Trees Forever since 1991, coordinating tree-planting events, training volunteers with tree selection, reviewing site plans, and facilitating local efforts. Patty also serves as the membership steward at Trees Forever, which provides her with the opportunity to meet with both new and longtime Trees Forever members to share the great work of the Iowa's Living Roadways programs. Before joining Trees Forever, Patty worked as a horticulturist in eastern Iowa for Iowa State University Extension.

Brad Riphagen

Brad has a bachelor of arts in biology and a master of science in land resources with a focus on prairie restoration and soils. He has been a Trees Forever field coordinator since 1995 and has worked in almost all the program areas, including community tree plantings, Community Visioning, and buffer/watershed work. He has also taken a strong interest in reducing storm-water runoff, especially in urban areas, through the use of infiltration practices such as rain gardens and bioretention basins. Brad is energized by the interaction with volunteers around the state and especially in southwest Iowa. "The fact that people want to make where they live a better place and that Trees Forever can provide some assistance in their efforts is very gratifying."

Shannon Ramsay

Shannon founded Trees Forever in 1989 as a volunteer; today she has more than 25 years of wonderful Trees Forever history. Whether working with staff, board, partners, or volunteers, Shannon strives to create a structure that supports and sustains those involved. Shannon has served on numerous national and local boards. She enjoys the outdoors, whether biking, kayaking, or gardening. She lives on 45 acres along the Wapsipinicon River in Jones County, Iowa.

Carole Teator

Carole Teator is Trees Forever's program director and also manages the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program for the organization. Her duties include leading Trees Forever's nine field coordinators who serve as facilitators for the community visioning process. Carole has master's degrees in both English and community and regional planning from Iowa State University and she has worked for Trees Forever for more than thirteen years.

Iowa DOT

Stuart Anderson

Director, Planning, Programming, and Modal Division, Iowa DOT

Troy Siefert

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Karen Bobo
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Timothy O. Borich

A Master in the Art of

September 3, 2015, marked the end of an era. On that day, Timothy O. Borich stepped down from his position as program director of the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) program and associate dean for extension and outreach in the ISU College of Design.

He continues to teach part-time as an associate professor in the ISU Department of Community and Regional Planning, and remains a co-Principal Investigator for the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program.

Borich has been involved with the Community Visioning Program since before Iowa's Living Roadways was created, when the program was an extension pilot project developed by then-extension landscape architect Julia Badenhope.

"I brought a lot of background in leadership development and processes in getting communities organized to act, and Julia brought design expertise…it made a good combination," said Borich.

Borich is well versed in ISU's engagement with communities throughout Iowa. He's been involved in community outreach work at Iowa State for the past 36 years.

"Tim Borich has mastered the art of asking beautiful questions—the kind that help us shift our reasoning and assist in bringing about change," said Cathann Kress, Iowa State University vice president for extension and outreach. "He has applied this skill to the Community Visioning Program where more than 200 Iowa communities have contemplated the 'what if' and 'how can we' questions that are ambitious and merely asking them involves taking action. Engaging people in these types of questions makes them think—and there have been some amazing answers."

In 1979, Borich started with ISU Extension as a field specialist in Sioux City. Before joining the College of Design faculty in 1993, he was an extension liaison to the Iowa Department of Economic Development (now the Iowa Economic Authority), and then assistant director of North Central Regional Center for Rural Development while earning a PhD in sociology.

His education and experience have made Borich an exceptionally effective leader, according to Badenhope, Community

Left: *ISU design students help volunteers with planting at a Habitat for Humanity home in the 6th Avenue neighborhood in Des Moines.* ***Right:*** *Students in a design-build studio prepare the site prior to building four-person camping cabins in South Sioux City's Scenic Park.*

the Beautiful Question

Visioning Program director and professor of landscape architecture.

"He's walked the walk, and as a result, he understands the needs of field staff and faculty, and as an administrator he is able to communicate effectively across disciplinary boundaries," she said.

During his tenure as CED program director, Borich has spearheaded innovative programs, many of which are based on both internal and external partnerships.

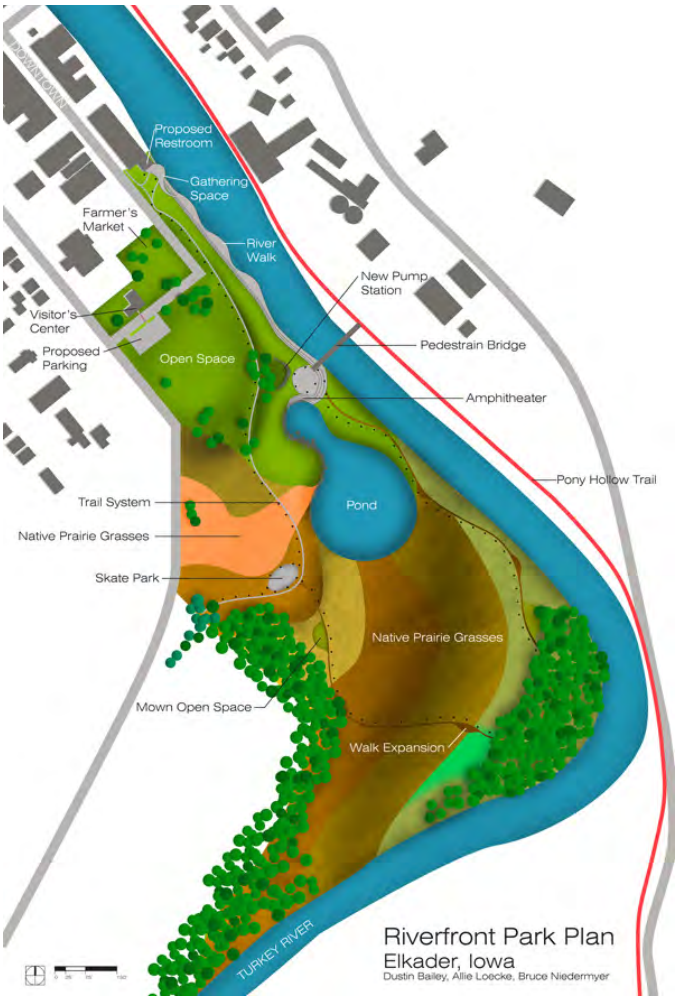
External partnerships initiated by Borich include community development specialist positions shared with Chambers of Commerce or local economic development organizations in communities across the state. These partnerships have leveraged millions of dollars in grants and contracts.

"When you think of Iowa State University and ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development, think cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships. We are firm believers that in many cases we can accomplish more working together than separately," Borich said.

The ISU Extension and Outreach CED program works with all levels of government, ranging from townships and local governments to regional and state government agencies. The program is also well aligned with numerous state and local organizations. For instance, since the CED program established a partnership with the Iowa League of Cities nearly five years ago, more than 9,000 government officials have been trained on topics including township trustee responsibilities, budget management, tax incremental financing, and urban renewal reporting.

"Some of these agreements allow us to provide more extensive research and outreach to local groups with specific needs. In other cases, we work with state agencies to provide outreach and research jointly to communities across Iowa. Still other

Top: *Tim Borich shares an issue of the CED program newsletter during the 2007 Art Splash in Sioux City.* ***Middle:*** *Youth in Fairfield learn how to plant trees on Arbor Day.* ***Bottom:*** *Nine landscape architecture students designed and built an outdoor decompression area specifically for correctional officers and staff at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women.*



Top: *A landscape architecture community design studio designed a park for Elkader that integrates recreational elements such as a skate park and an amphitheater.* ***Bottom:*** *An ISU design student beautifies Downtown Sioux City through a collaborative effort of ISU Design West and Sioux City Downtown Partners.*

agreements create joint positions that benefit each organization," Borich said.

Working with Tom Blewett, his counterpart at the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Borich established the University Extension Community Development Collaborative (UECDC), which serves the Dubuque area and houses a faculty position shared by the two universities, the first position of its kind. With UECDC as a vehicle, ISU Extension and Outreach co-hosted the 44th International Conference of the Community Development Society in Dubuque in 2014 with the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the University of Illinois Extension. More than 250 community development professionals from around the world experienced community engagement, Midwest style.

CED has been proactively engaging the growing Latino population in Iowa since 2007, when Borich hired ISU Extension and Outreach's first Latino community development specialist, Himar Hernández, who has earned national recognition for his work with Iowa's Latinos. One in three CED specialists are fluent in Spanish, an accomplishment in which Borich takes pride.

"Thanks to Tim, ISU Extension and Outreach has embraced the concept of outreach to immigrants and new Iowans," Hernández said. "We were doing things that nobody else was doing. He took a leap of faith that shows real vision—not only within Iowa but nationwide."

To Borich, engaging with immigrant populations is practical rather than altruistic. "It's a resource," he said. "When the state helps immigrant populations realize their dreams, it helps the state realize its dream – starting new businesses, families buying a new house, having kids in schools that need kids."

"Extension was there 120 years ago for a different set of immigrants and different sets of issues," he added.

Left: *Students in the Retail-Scapes Studio created storefront designs for seven Latino-owned businesses in Storm Lake.* ***Right:*** *Tortillería Los Twins is one of many Latino-owned businesses started with assistance from ISU Extension and Outreach community development specialists.*

In addition, Borich has provided leadership in the documentation and reporting of CED program impacts at the state and national levels. He has helped develop multistate systems that are being adapted across the country.

The connection between ISU Extension and Outreach and the College of Design was established when Borich took over as program director of the CED program, and extension programming related to the college grew significantly during his tenure.

"I believe in integration of extension, research and teaching as a pedagogy," he explained. "Student outreach enriches experience for extension people and the community people involved; it's part of the pedagogy of the college and should be for the university."

When Borich became associate director of the College of Design's Institute for Design Research and Outreach, student outreach took place but was not part of a formal program. Although this was not problematic for experienced faculty with connections in the state, newer faculty who had not formed relationships with organizations or communities had difficulty identifying projects for their classes. Under Borich, IDRO began working with faculty to set up projects, creating more opportunities for classes to do outreach. As CED director, he has added part-time faculty positions from the Architecture, Interior Design, and Art and Visual Culture programs to Extension and Outreach.

"In a typical year, we now engage more than 200 Iowa State students in our Community and Economic Development program," he said. "We connect ISU students to work with Iowa's communities for the benefit of both. Students learn. Communities learn. Staff and faculty learn. When it comes together, everybody wins."

Nearly 20 years after he helped Badenhope with the first pilot visioning communities, Borich reflected on the continued success of the program, as well as the longevity of the partnership with Iowa State University, Trees Forever, and the program sponsor, the Iowa Department of Transportation.

"The people make those kinds of partnerships last," he said. "The leadership in those organizations [has been] committed to make it happen. [Iowa's Living Roadways] is one of the best partnerships of this sort in the country, and the fruits of that are self evident. You can see it in the landscape."

Community Visioning from the Participant Point of View

Introduction

When the Iowa's Living Roadways Program marks its 20th anniversary next year, 215 communities will have participated in the Community Visioning Program, several of them more than once. During the past 19 years, the visioning process has evolved to meet communities' changing needs and to increase citizen involvement through methods ranging from random-sample surveys and focus groups to social media.

The changes made are based on ongoing program evaluation in terms of number and quality of projects completed, as well as impact on social capital and economic development of client communities. Feedback from steering committee members in past visioning communities has become a vital source of information about what works and what doesn't when it comes to engaging the community at large, whether during the visioning process itself or later, when committees actually attempt to implement projects.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Visioning Program for communities both during and after the planning process, Trees Forever field coordinators met with 182 representatives from 46 past communities over a period from 2006 to 2014 (Table 1, Figure 1). In face-to-face interviews, the field coordinators asked participants open-ended questions related to their expectations, positive aspects of the process, actions taken to publicize the process, and challenges or obstacles experienced. The interviewers also asked about the impacts realized after committees finished the planning process. Community representatives shared economic and/or livability issues, derivative projects, sustainability of the steering committee, and their current group's connection to Trees Forever staff.

Iowa State University program staff coded data using NViVo software (a platform for analyzing unstructured data) and analyzed them using SPSS. The results of the analysis of the interviews is presented here in two parts: responses to questions about the visioning process itself and responses to questions about post-visioning activities.

Figure 1. Communities sampled

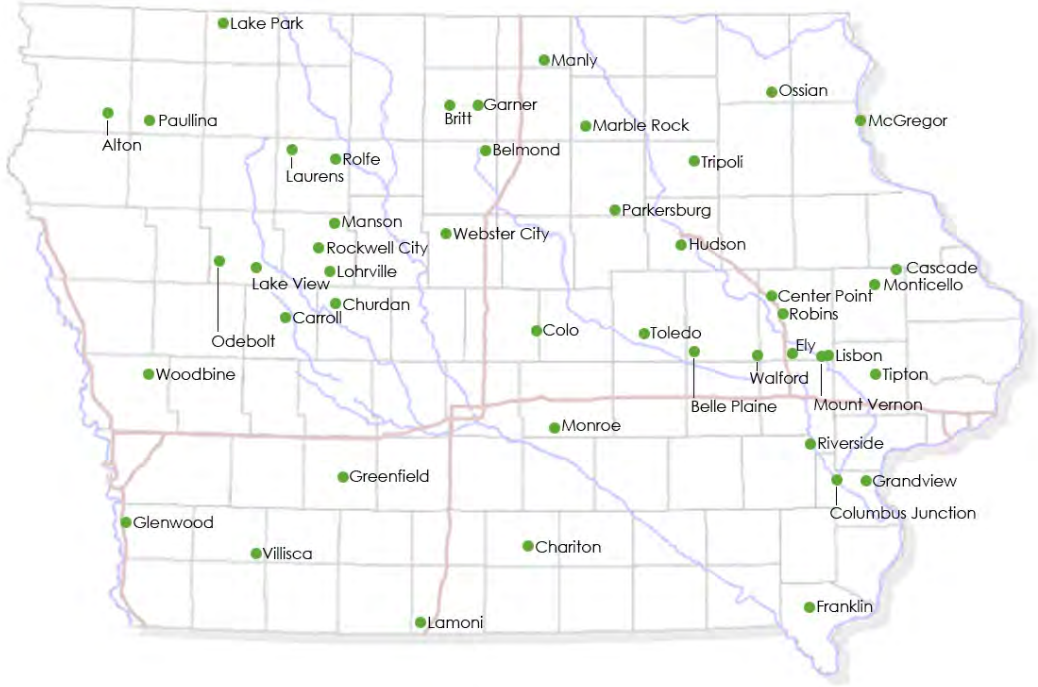


Table 1. Communities surveyed by year of participation in the visioning program.

Program Year	Community	Year of Interview	Number Interviewed
1996–97	Carroll	2006	1
1997–98	Churdan	2006	2
	Columbus Junction	2006	1
	Greenfield	2006	6
1998–99	Grandview	2006	10
	Toledo	2006	1
2002	Cascade	2006	1
2003	Alton	2006	1
	Belmond	2006	4
2004	Britt	2006	1
2007	Franklin	2011	1
	Lake View	2014	1
	Lamoni	2014	6
	Manly	2010	4
	Marble Rock	2010	4
	Tipton	2012	2
2008	Belle Plaine	2014	15
	Ely	2012	1
	Lake Park	2013	6
	Manson	2012	5
	Odebolt	2014	8
	Webster City	2010	3
	Woodbine	2014	4
2009	Garner	2012	7
	Glenwood	2014	2
	Laurens	2012	1
	Lohrville	2012	3
	Parkersburg	2014	4
	Riverside	2012	7
	Robins	2014	5
2010	Hudson	2014	2
	Rolfe	2014	4
	Walford	2014	2
2011	Chariton	2014	6
	Lisbon	2014	3
	McGregor	2014	2
	Monroe	2014	1
	Monticello	2014	1
	Mt Vernon	2014	7
	Rockwell City	2012	2
2012	Center Point	2014	7
	Colo	2014	6
	Paullina	2013	1
	Tripoli	2014	1
	Villisca	2014	9
2013	Ossian	2014	11
		Total Interviewed:	182

Projects Completed or in Progress

Nearly 98% of the sampled communities have completed projects since participating in the visioning program. Of these, nearly 9% have completed seven or more projects. Only 2.2% (one community) did not completed any projects (Table 2, Figure 2).

A total of 137 projects were completed. Table 3 shows a breakdown of projects completed by the professional consulting firms that developed concept plans for the study communities and year of participation.

Table 2. Projects completed

Projects completed	Communities	
	No.	Percent
0	1	2.2%
1 to 3	30	65.2%
4 to 6	11	23.9%
7 or more	4	8.7%
Total:	46	100.0%

Figure 2. Projects completed

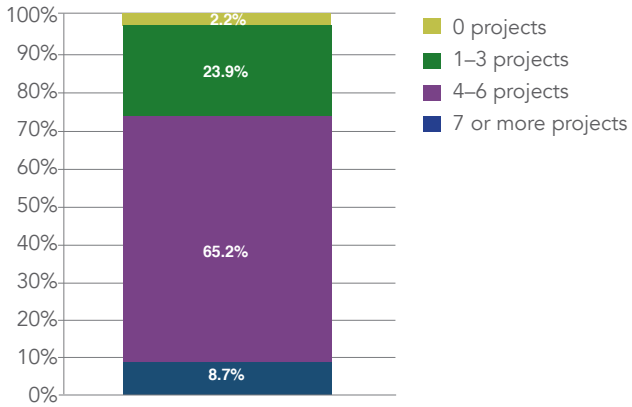


Table 3. Firms and number of projects completed for the sampled communities

Firm	Projects
Adamson & Associates	3
Bolton & Menk	3
Ciaccio Dennel Group	5
Craig Ritland Landscape Architect	23
Dunbar/Jones	5
Engineering Plus	2
Flenker Land Architecture Consultants	15
Genus Landscape Architects	10
Godbold Landscape Architect	18
Hall and Hall Engineers	10
Hoffman Design Consultants	8
Howard R. Green & Company	4
Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company	1
Jack E. Leaman	2
Dan Pratt	3
Dolores Silkworth	10
Shive-Hattery, Inc.	4
Veenstra & Kimm Engineering	4
Yaggy Colby Associates	7
Total Projects:	137

Question about the Visioning Process

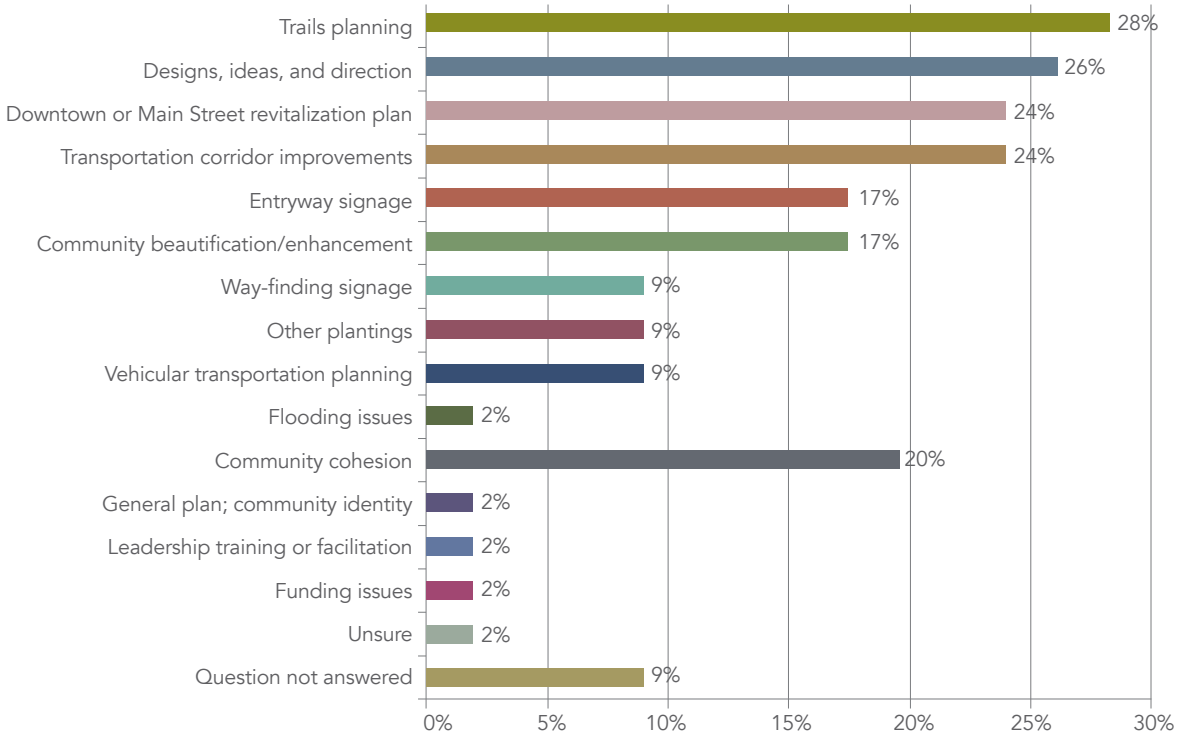
1. What were your expectations going into the visioning process?

Communities applied to participate in the Community Visioning Program for a variety of reasons, ranging from trail planning and way-finding to funding assistance and leadership training. The expectations of the representatives interviewed are shown in Figure 3. Interviewees did not list any expectations at a significantly higher rate than others.

Trail planning was the most frequently mentioned expectation; however, less than 30% of the sampled communities indicated trail planning as a goal. Interviewees from approximately 25% of sampled communities named designs, ideas, and direction; downtown or Main Street planning; and transportation corridor improvements as expectations. Other physical expectations included entryway signage and beautification (17% each), and way-finding signage and planting (9% each).

Social expectations include community cohesion (20%), community identity (2%), and leadership training (2%). One community expected assistance with funding.

Figure 3. Committee expectations for the visioning process



1a. Were the expectations met, exceeded, or not met, and why?

Interviewees from 80% of the sampled communities indicated that their expectations for the visioning program were met or exceeded. Nearly 44% of the sampled communities' representatives said that their expectations were exceeded. Nine percent said their expectations were partially met. Representatives from only two of the 46 communities indicated that their expectations were not met. This question was not answered for two communities (Table 4).

Of the communities whose expectations were met or exceeded, representatives from 10 had praise for the consultants with whom they worked. Of communities whose expectations were not met, two had criticism for their respective firms. For example, interviewees in one community said that the designer did not provide them with a plan that they could use, because the Iowa DOT would not allow what was proposed. As a result, more than half of the concept plan could not be implemented. The interviewees thought that all state entities should "be on the same page" in terms of what is and is not allowed regarding transportation enhancements. Interviewees also indicated that assistance with securing funds and writing grants is needed.

Table 4. How well the program met expectations of sampled communities

	Frequency	
Expectations were:	No.	%
Exceeded	20	43.5%
Met	17	37.0%
Partly met	4	8.7%
Not met	2	4.3%

"The open house presentation to the community was good and generated lots of feedback to the committee from the wider community."

2. As you reflect on the process, what were the high points and what factors contributed to making those aspects so positive and memorable?

Representatives from nearly 50% of the sampled communities cited community involvement as the high point of the visioning process. Interviewees were impressed by the number of people who provided feedback on the proposed designs. Committee members in one community described public involvement as "critical." They said that the open house meetings for input and the public presentation were important parts of the process and that having the design team and Trees Forever facilitator at these events to answer questions was helpful.

They also appreciated how the process engaged different people in the community, particularly the youth at the focus groups. Some interviewees said they liked involving residents early in the process in conversations about where people walk, how youth get from place to place, safety issues, etc.

Nearly 40% of sampled communities named the open house as a high point of the visioning process, and 35% cited the vision of the landscape architect (Table 5, Figure 4).

"The [landscape] architects came up with fantastic design ideas for the town. Everyone was pleased with the sketches that were completed for [our community]. For example, limestone was incorporated and highlighted throughout the designs and is one of the major, existing architectural features in [our community]."

"[We] loved getting the kids involved!"

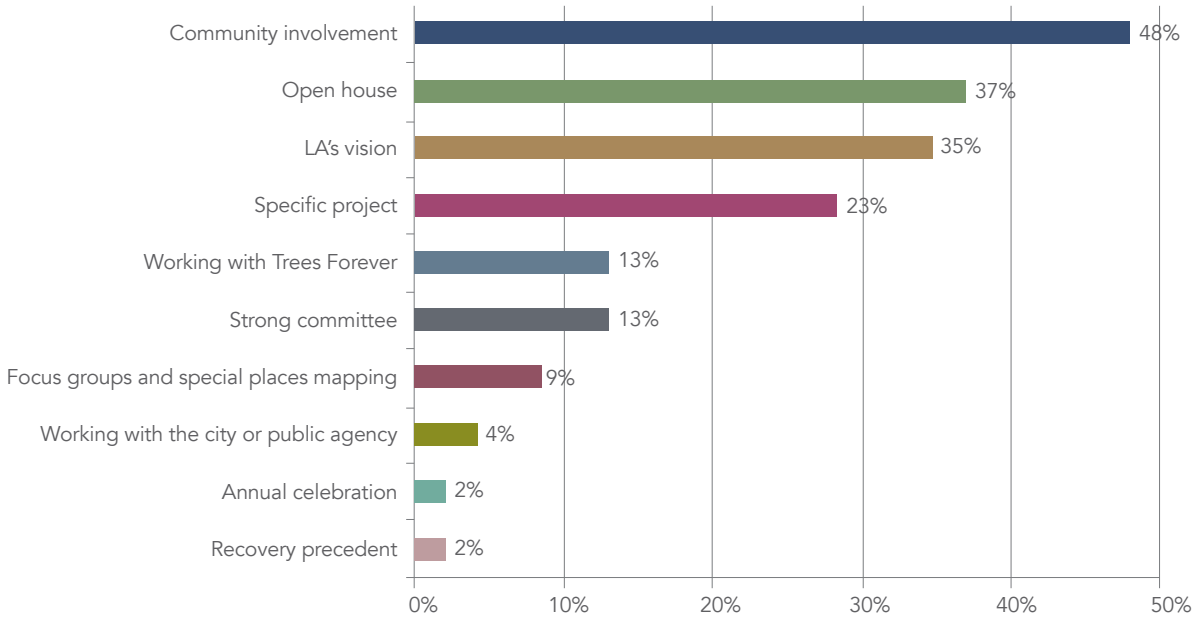
One interviewer recorded that "the group was very impressed by the way their design team looked at patterns of change from the 1850s through the present to help determine how the community was settled, and how transportation changes influence the design of the community and their concept plans." Another interviewer noted that the participants enjoyed seeing the variety of ideas that the consultant and the student interns developed, and they described involving students as a "win-win" strategy. Interviewees also indicated that the vision helped sell the projects to the community.

Other high points mentioned during the interviews included a specific project (28%), a strong steering committee (13%), working with Trees Forever (13%), and the focus groups and special places mapping assessments (8.7%).

Table 5. High points of the visioning process

High points	Frequency	
	No.	%
Community involvement	22	47.8%
Open house	17	37.0%
LA's vision	16	34.8%
Specific project	13	28.3%
Strong committee	6	13.0%
Working with Trees Forever	6	13.0%
Focus groups and special places mapping	4	8.7%
Working with the city or public agency	2	4.3%
Annual celebration	1	2.2%
Recovery precedent	1	2.2%
Question not answered	1	2.2%

Figure 4. High points of the visioning process



3. What actions did your committee take during the visioning process to have your efforts noticed and shared in the community?

Sending press releases to local newspapers was the most common strategy used to share the visioning process with the public among the sample communities (67.4%). Nearly 40% of the communities used public events—especially with food—to inform the public (Table 6). One steering committee held the public presentation meeting at a pancake breakfast, during which more than 400 people were served and all walked by the committee members and the presentation boards. Some committees took their presentation boards to community events and to city council meetings during the first year of implementation.

"We have a very large community gathering every year in August for crime night out. Our committee had a booth with information about our projects and a sign-up sheet to start a local garden club to assist in beautification projects throughout our community."

Table 6. Actions taken to market the visioning process

	Frequency	
	No.	%
Press releases	31	67.4%
Public events	18	39.1%
Word of mouth	11	23.9%
Fliers	10	21.7%
Meetings and keeping minutes	10	21.7%
Engaged other community groups	7	15.2%
Number of times mentioned	6	13.0%
Website postings and social media	4	8.7%
Presentation to city council	3	6.5%
Public access/TV sports	3	6.5%
Question not answered	3	6.5%
E-mail	2	4.3%
Radio spots	2	4.3%
Notice with utility bill	1	2.2%

When the types of actions taken by committees were categorized and compared to the number of projects completed, some interesting patterns emerged (Table 7). For example, approximately 80% communities completing between one and six projects relied most heavily on traditional forms of communication—that is, press releases, public access television, radio spots, and presentations to city council. These communities also relied on public notices/events, such as fliers posted in public places or sent in utility bills and community events.

Half of the communities completing seven or more projects relied on digital media (websites, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter), public notices/events, personal contacts (word or mouth and engaging other community groups), and other actions (meetings and keeping meeting minutes).

Of all the communities completing project, those completing four to six projects took actions from 2.9 of the five categories. The average among all of the communities completing projects was 2.5 categories.

Table 7. Actions taken to market the visioning process

Projects completed	No.	Type of Action					Average no. of actions
		Traditional communication	Digital communication	Public notice/event	Personal contact	Other action	
1 to 3	30	80.0%	16.7%	73.3%	43.3%	23.3%	2.3
4 to 6	11	81.2%	18.2%	63.6%	27.3%	45.5%	2.9
7 or more	4	25.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	2.5
Total	46	80.4%	21.7%	69.6%	39.1%	32.6%	2.5

3a. How did the community view your work and results (and how did you know)?

In more than 50% of the sampled communities, residents were supportive of the visioning process, according to interviewees. Approximately 28% of the interview participants indicated that residents did not support the process (Table 8, Figure 5).

During one interview, committee members described how residents would approach them to discuss the process and that when people attended city council meetings, they showed an interest in the program.

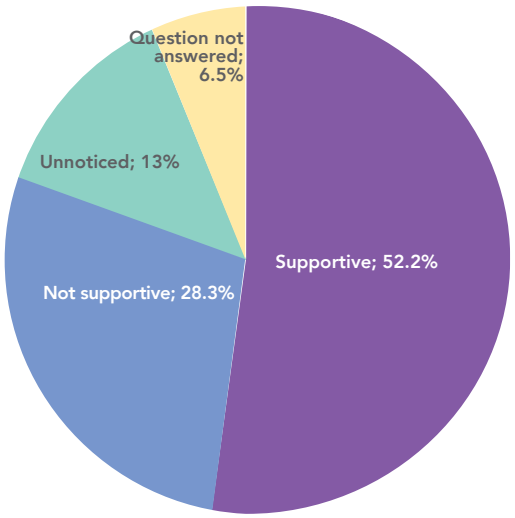
"People told us they liked the projects in conversation. [We received] positive feedback at the public presentation. For example, one person said, 'When you get ready to build that trail, I'll be there with my skid loader to help.'"

Table. 8. Communities' views of program results

	Frequency	
	No.	%
Supportive	24	52.2%
Not supportive	13	28.3%
Unnoticed	6	13.0%
Question not answered	3	6.5%

"We heard comments and [had] good turnout at the public meeting. [We] got funding and support for the east gateway sign."

Figure 5. Communities' views of program results



4. Do you recall specific challenges or obstacles during the process?

Representatives in only 13% of the sampled communities indicated that they did not experience any obstacles during the visioning process. These communities participated in the program in 2007 (Lake View and Lamoni), 2008 (Garner and Riverside), 2009 (Lohrville), and 2012 (Center Point).

The most frequently cited obstacle was a lack of participation/support from residents. More than 40% of the sampled communities experienced this problem (Table 9, Figure 6). The lack of support stemmed from a variety of reasons, including unwillingness to change, concerns about funding for project implementation, and difficulty understanding the assessments.

For example, some interviewees noted that it was difficult to get enough participation in the community assessments, particularly the focus groups and the survey. Some residents did not support the assessment process. According to one interviewer, "during the process of collecting photos [in one community], a challenge came up during which a community member became very upset that someone was photographing their property. It was a concern that the private property was going to be identified as a project. It was challenging that the photographer wasn't fully aware of the program being limited to public property."

Thirty-five percent of the communities experienced a lack of cooperation from the city or public agencies. Lack of support from the city and inconsistency between the Iowa DOT's policies and the community's needs were some of the reasons stated. One obstacle mentioned repeatedly by committee members in one community was the way that the city dealt with proposals to change the downtown square, according to the interviewer. The city was apparently not in favor of change.

More than 30% of sampled communities cited funding as one of the primary challenges in the visioning process. Because the program does not provide implementation funding, interviewees suggested adding assistance with grant writing to the process.

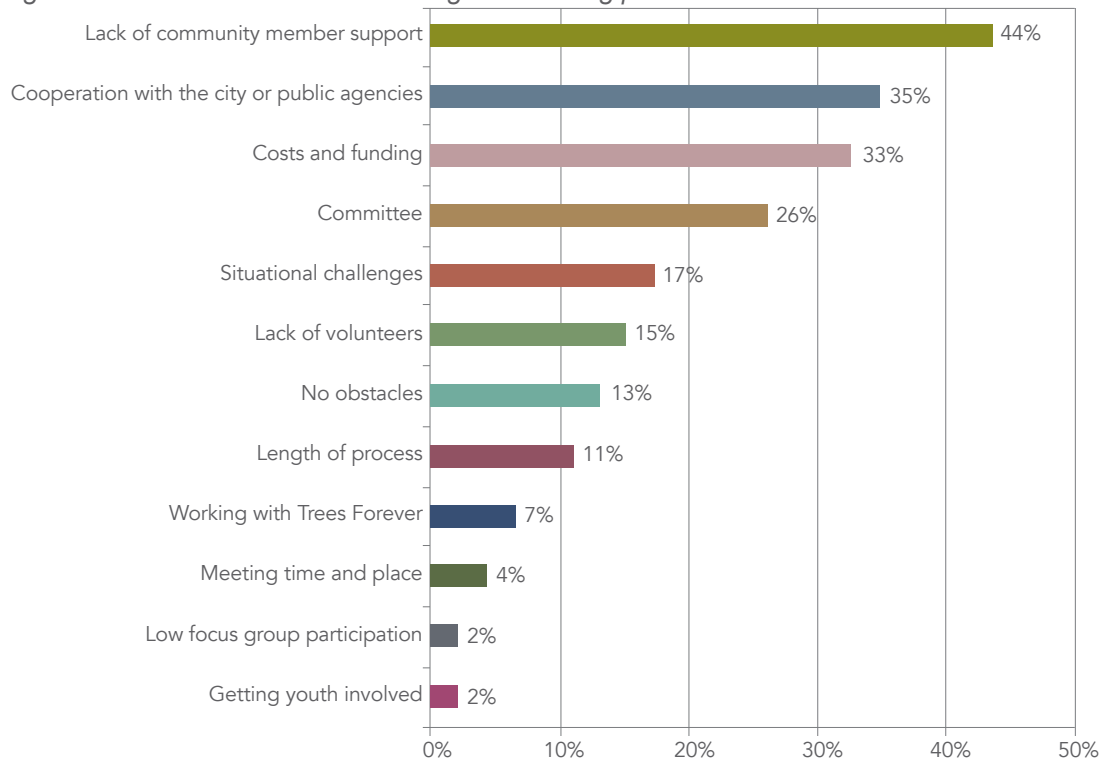
"It took some time for some members of the community to get on board. It always helps once you show them something. So while we didn't have stellar participation early on things got better as the process progressed, especially after the open house."

"Getting everyone on board was a challenge; however, as [interviewee] pointed out, even some of the biggest complainers came to help pull weeds so they started to come around. Of course many small towns are limited by manpower and [our community] is no different."

Table 9. Challenges and obstacles during the process

	Frequency	
	No.	%
Lack of community member participation/support	20	43.5%
Lack of cooperation with the city or public agencies	16	34.8%
Cost and funding	15	32.6%
Committee	12	26.1%
Situational challenges	8	17.4%
Lack of volunteers	7	15.2%
No issues	6	13.0%
Length of process	5	10.9%
Working with Trees Forever	3	6.5%
Meeting time and place	2	4.3%
Getting youth involvement	1	2.2%
Low focus group participation	1	2.2%

Figure 6. Obstacles encountered during the visioning process



Questions about the Post-visioning Process

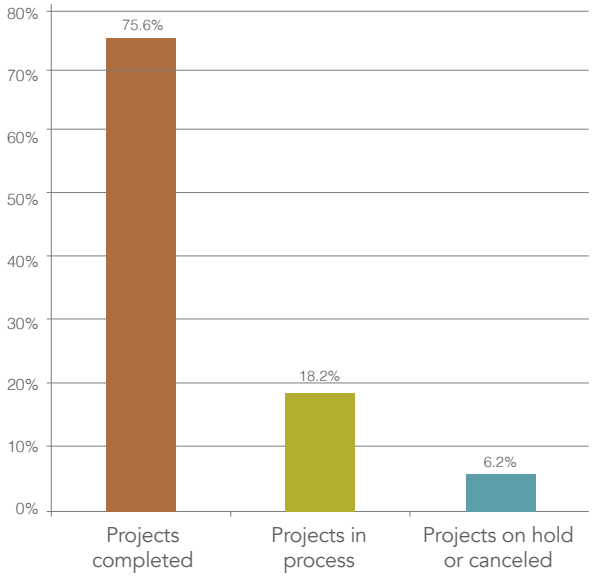
1. How far did you get with the concept plan that came out of the visioning process? Design? Funding? Implementation? What factors made that achievable (or what obstacles prevented achievement)?

Representatives from 45 of the sample communities identified 181 projects proposed through the visioning process. Representatives from six of the communities did not answer this question. More than 75% of the 181 projects have been completed, and 18.2% were in process at the time of the interview. Approximately 6% of the projects are on hold or were canceled (Table 10, Figure 7).

Table 10. Status of concept implementation

	Frequency	
	No.	%
Projects completed	137	75.6%
Projects in process	33	18.2%
Projects on hold or canceled	11	6.2%

Figure 7. Status of concept implementation



2. How would you identify the impact on your community as a result of the visioning process? In livability factors In economic benefits?

Representatives from 63% (29 communities) said that the visioning process had a positive impact on their communities. Interviewees from seven communities stated that it is too early to tell what the impact is, and representatives from six communities said that the visioning process had no impact on their community. The question was not answered in 9% of the communities (Figure 8).

All of the participants who said that the visioning process had a positive impact on their communities mentioned the affect on the quality of life of the residents. Improvements to aesthetics and the economy and tourism were cited by 62% of participants. Other positive impacts mentioned were increased community solidarity and coherence in city planning (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Impact of visioning program on communities

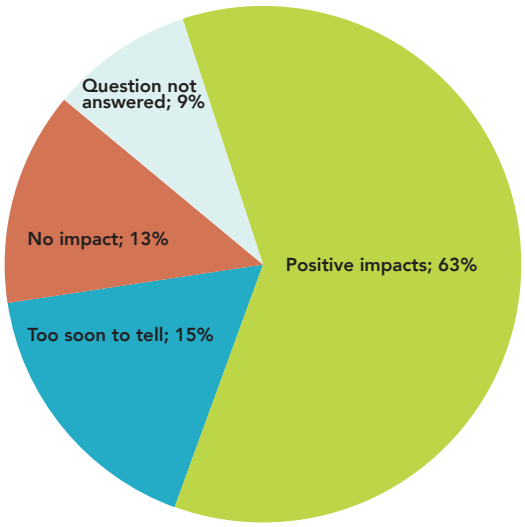
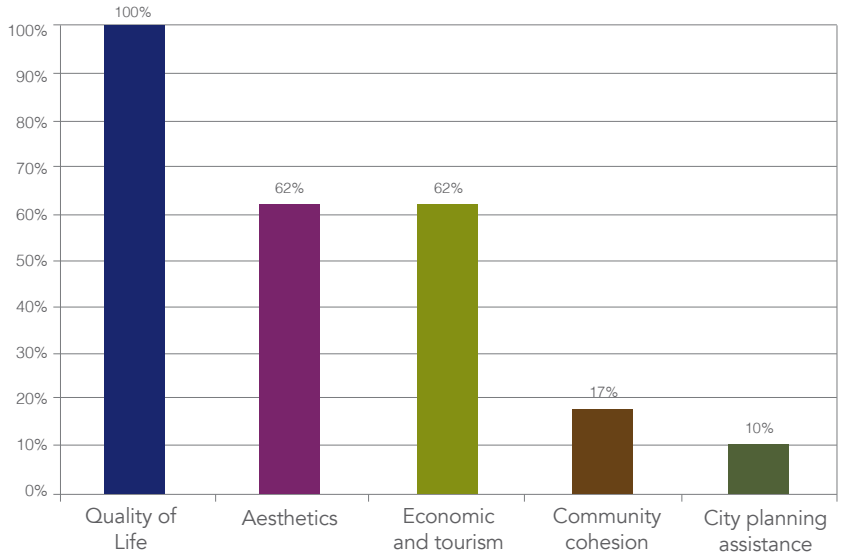


Figure 9. Types of positive impacts



3. Did any other community projects come out of the visioning process, or are any projects under consideration for future implementation?

Other projects came out of the visioning process in 42 of the 46 sampled communities. Representatives from more than 40% of these communities mentioned trees and planting projects. Trail improvement projects—both land and water—and sidewalks were derived from visioning in 33% of the communities. Park improvements and corridor enhancements were derived from visioning in approximately 30% of the communities (30% and 28%, respectively). Other projects mentioned were water and hydrology, historic preservation, signage, art, and tennis courts (Table 11).

Table 11. Projects derived from the visioning process

Type of projects	Frequency	
	No.	%
Trees and plantings	19	41.3%
Trails (land and water) and sidewalks	15	32.6%
Park improvements	14	30.4%
Corridor enhancements and beautification	13	28.3%
Water and hydrology	5	10.9%
Historic preservation or interpretation	4	8.7%
Signage	3	6.5%
No derivative projects	3	2.2%
Art	2	2.2%
Tennis court	1	2.2%
Yes, but no description provided	1	2.2%
Question not answered	1	2.2%

4. Is there a committee that still meets? If so, who are the participants?

More than half of the communities surveyed have maintain their original steering committees, while in one-third of the communities the original committee was either replaced or has evolved into a different group (Table 12).

Table 12. Status of original steering committee

	Frequency	
	No.	%
Original committee exists	24	52.2%
Committee replaced or evolved into a different group	15	32.6%
Individual leader	3	6.5%
No	4	8.7%

4a. What factors have affected the sustainability of this groups efforts?

Strong leadership was the main reason why steering committees still exist and are still working under the umbrella of the visioning project. Coordination with other organizations and strong community involvement were other factors in the sustainability of these groups (Table 13).

Table 13. Factors affecting committee sustainability

	Frequency	
	No.	%
Strong leadership or committee	18	75.0%
Coordination with other organizations	9	37.5%
Strong community involvement	5	20.8%
Passion and desire	4	16.7%
Projects to be done	2	8.3%

5. What is your group's current connection to or identification with Trees Forever? How can Trees Forever help with future projects?

More than 90% of the visioning communities have some kind of active relationship with Trees Forever. These communities contacted Trees Forever primarily for funding consultations; information regarding on issues such as trees, landscaping, trails, and other transportation corridor enhancements; and leadership issues (Table 14).

Table 14. Committees' existing relationship with Trees Forever

	Frequency	
	No.	%
No active relationship	3	6.5%
With active relationship	43	93.5%
Funding Consultation	26	60.5%
Source of Information	22	51.2%
Source of Leadership	5	11.6%
Source for Project Evaluation	3	7.0%
Training	1	2.3%

Conclusion

Since 2002, program evaluations consistently show that visioning communities are completing a significant number of the projects proposed through the process and that participation in the program spurs communities to pursue additional projects outside the scope of visioning.

Of the 46 visioning communities that were represented in the follow-up interviews conducted between 2006 and 2014 for this study, only one did not complete any projects, indicating that 98% of visioning communities complete at least one project. Of those, 65.2% completed 1–3 projects, 23.9% completed 4–6 projects, and 8.7% completed 7 or more projects. This figure is consistent with past evaluations, which have shown that approximately 94% of communities completed at least one project.

Representatives from 45 of the 46 communities identified 181 projects proposed during the visioning process, of which more than 75% have been completed and 18% were in progress at the time of the interview. Interviewees from more than 90% of the study communities also indicated that participation in the visioning resulted in additional projects not originally proposed during the process.

Representatives from 80% of the study communities indicated that their expectations were met or exceeded; interviewees in 44% of the sample said that their expectations were exceeded. At the same time, 87% experienced obstacles during process—resident participation (44%), cooperation of local government and/or public agencies (35%), and obtaining funding (33%). Interviewees in 63% of the communities cited that the visioning process had a positive impact. Of these, all noted that quality of life was improved. These perceptions of steering committee members are consistent with previous program evaluations.

Implications

Because the results of this study are based on anecdotal evidence provided during interviews, a logical next step is to verify information when possible. For instance, whether or not a committee engaged the city council during the process is verifiable through examination of public records. Use of both traditional and digital communications methods is also verifiable.

In addition, further analysis is needed to more fully understand the relationship between the characteristics of steering committees and actions taken, as well as that between committee characteristics and number of projects completed. How these factors affected the support of residents should also be examined.

A correlation of the data collected from the 46 communities with data collected in previous evaluations could further confirm the validity of this and past program evaluations. Case studies in several visioning communities are currently under way that include videotaped interviews and photo documentation of projects.

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