



A New Vision for Iowa's Rural Towns: 25 Years of Action

25th Celebration of Community Visioning



2021

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Program Partners



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Welcome!

A remarkable partnership, the Community Visioning Program emerged from the shared desire of Iowa State University (ISU), Trees Forever, and the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) to assist small Iowa communities with planning and design. Our vision was to bring community members together to imagine a better local environment and provide opportunities for volunteers to collaborate to make their objectives a reality.

Mark Masteller, the chief landscape architect at the Iowa DOT at the time, facilitated the formation of our partnership, providing valuable insight into DOT's expertise, guidelines, and funding sources. The DOT has continued to support Community Visioning and has allowed us to improve our process through research-based assessments and public engagement strategies.

Landscape architects in private practice have partnered from the beginning to create designs with communities and to mentor planning and design students. Trees Forever staff facilitate local meetings and provide help for the long term, including funding for projects and assistance with completing plans.

Over the years, the program has assisted more than 250 Iowa communities throughout the state, ranging in size from towns of fewer than 100 residents to cities with close to 9,000 people. The dedicated leaders and volunteers from these communities have come together to create accessible sidewalks, trails, bridges, roadside parks, and more. In this report, you'll see the diversity of projects created with assistance from Trees Forever field coordinators; private-sector landscape architects; and ISU faculty, staff, and students. These have forever changed the landscape of Iowa!

Our emphasis on using native vegetation has allowed for improvement of water quality and the creation of habitat for birds and pollinators in innovative and sustainable ways, while addressing transportation issues related to water.

In addition to the tangible impact of the built projects, the program has also brought transportation to the forefront in these communities, making them accessible to residents of all ages and abilities, has provided support during disaster recovery, and has helped communities grow around great infrastructure and improve residents' quality of life.

Congratulations to our partners and to Iowa communities and volunteer leaders who have brought their ambitious visions to reality.



Julia Badenhope

Julia Badenhope
Professor & Community Visioning
Program Director

Stuart Anderson

Stuart Anderson
Director of Planning, Programming and
Modal Division, Iowa DOT

Shannon Ramsay

Shannon Ramsay
Founder & Trustee
Trees Forever

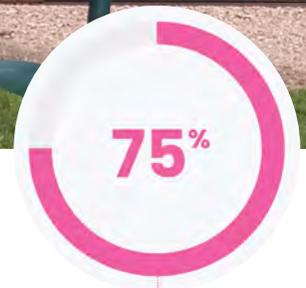
About Community Visioning



About 98% of visioning communities complete at least one project.



Nearly 50% of visioning communities complete four or more projects.



Nearly 75% of communities funded projects through local volunteers.

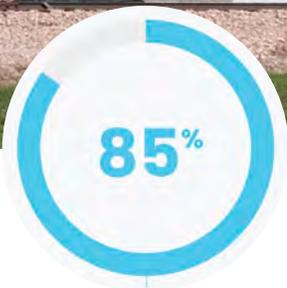


The Community Visioning Program integrates landscape planning and design with sustainable action to empower community leaders and volunteers in making sound, meaningful decisions about the local landscape.

Anchored by a committee of local residents, communities work closely with technical experts from Trees Forever, a private-sector landscape architect, and the Iowa State University Department of Landscape Architecture to create a transportation enhancement plan reflecting the values and identity of the community.

Throughout the process, the committee identifies and investigates the physical and cultural dimensions of landscape issues, sets goals for change, and develops implementation strategies for meeting community goals.

Successful completion of the visioning process results in a transportation enhancement plan and implementation strategies that empower communities to build meaningful townscapes, step by step, as resources become available.



Nearly 85% of visioning steering committees are still active in some way.



Representatives from 63% of the communities reported that the program had a positive impact on their town.







Communities

Introduction

Over the past 25 years Community Visioning Program partners have had the pleasure of collaborating with thousands of rural Iowa residents from more than 250 communities. At least two dozen of those communities gained so much from their first experience that they chose to go through the program a second time to tackle additional goals for their transportation system. It is the community members themselves that make this program truly successful, from the leadership of the steering committees and the passionate engagement of participants in the focus groups to the can-do attitude of residents who come together to build projects and make real physical changes in their communities.

During the visioning process, community members share their experiences and local expertise, their concerns, and their goals, for which the designers interpret and provide

a visual representation. These designs set the stage for the next phase of the project, which is to get the projects implemented. This takes further collaboration, building support, seeking funding, and volunteering. To get the projects in the ground is no easy task and it can take a long time for projects to be fully realized, but during the course of this program, hundreds of the projects proposed have been implemented. In fact, 98% of communities that participate in the program complete at least one project. Many additional projects have also emerged from the visions developed in collaboration between the designers and community members. The following pages highlight just a small handful of the communities that have participated in the program and the success they have had in reaching the goals that they laid out through the visioning process.



Roadside park along US 30 in Clarence.



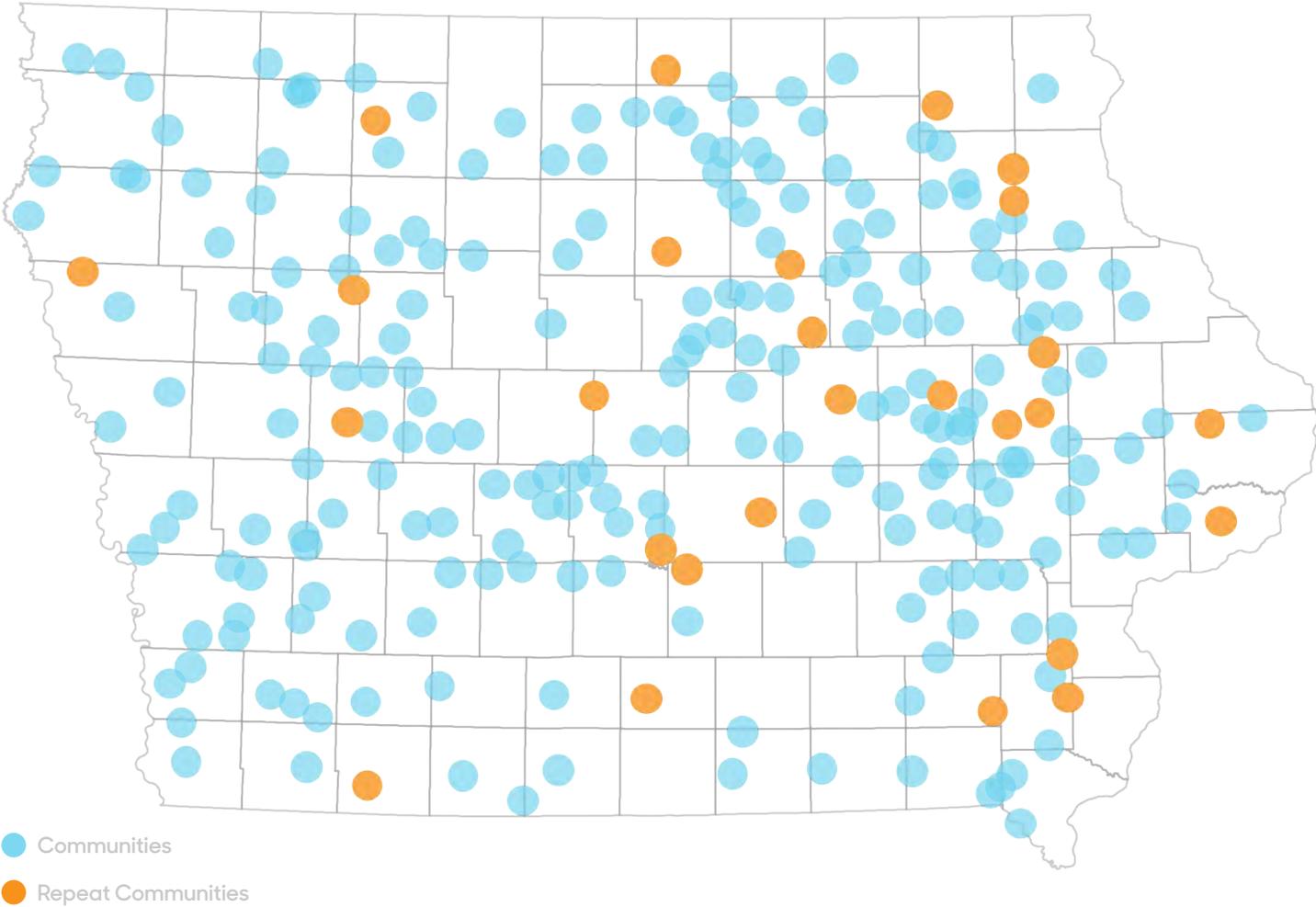
Downtown streetscape, Lake View.



Roadside planting, Shelby.



US 71 T-Bone Trail planting, Audubon.



1996-97

Ackley
Arnolds Park
Bedford
Carroll
Centerville
Colesburg
Eldora
George
Oakland
Princeton
Steamboat Rock
Urbana

1997-98

Atlantic
Churdan
Clarence
Columbus Junction
Decorah
Dysart
Greenfield
Hampton
Keosauqua
Lewis
Lisbon
Marengo
Moravia
Norwalk
Orange City
Rock Rapids
Rudd
Slater
Storm Lake
Wapello

1998-99

Charles City
Colfax
Delhi
Earlville
Forest City
Grandview
Grinnell
Hopkinton
Monroe
Moville
Parkersburg
Prairie City
Toledo

1999-00

Brooklyn
Creston
Grundy Center
Logan
Mediapolis
Missouri Valley
Red Oak
Strawberry Point
Vinton
Williamsburg

2000-01

Bancroft
Cherokee
Emmetsburg
Montezuma
Mount Pleasant
North Liberty
Oelwein
Sac City
Sheldon
Shell Rock
Titonka
Wellsburg

US 151 Corridor
Project (Jones
and Dubuque
Counties)



Gateway entry sign, Manson.



Trail bridge lighting, Adel.



Roadside park, Olin.



Downtown mural, Clarion.

2001-02

Alburnett
Anamosa
Cascade
Earlham
Hiawatha
Johnston
Le Grand
Long Grove
Maquoketa
Monticello
Nora Springs
Stanton

US 71 Corridor
Project (Audubon
County)

2002-03

Alton
Belmond
De Witt
Denver
Edgewood
Fairfield
Fredericksburg
Middletown
Mount Ayr
New Hampton

2003-04

Beaman
Britt
Fairfax
Floyd
Jesup
Lost Nation
Montrose
Olin
Shelby
Springville
Tiffin
Volga

2004-05

Asbury
Bloomfield
Donnellson
Gilbertville
Guthrie Center
Hawarden
Panora
Reinbeck
Solon
State Center
Washington
Woodward

2005-06

Algona
Aplington
Auburn
Elma
Galva
Lime Springs
Lone Tree
Northwood
Readlyn
West Okoboji
West Point
West Union



Volunteers planting at Trailhead Welcome Center, Tripoli.

2006-07

Balltown
Franklin
Guttenberg
Lake View
Lamoni
Manly
Marble Rock
Monona
Palo
Silver City
Tipton
Wellman

2007-08

Belle Plaine
Ely
Grand Junction
Harlan
Lake Park
Manson
Odebolt
Osceola
Sac City
Webster City
Winthrop
Woodbine

2008-09

Clermont
Elgin
Elkader
Garner
Glenwood
Lansing
Laurens
Lohrville
New Hartford
Parkersburg
Riverside
Robins

2009-10

Carson
Clarksville
Estherville
Gunder
Hudson
Independence
Knoxville
Rockford
Rolfe
St. Olaf
Story City
Walford
West Liberty

2010-11

Brighton
Elk Horn
Kimballton
Lisbon
Madrid
McGregor
Monroe
Monticello
Mount Vernon
Prairie City
Rockwell City
Sidney

2016-17

Adel
Clarion
Granger
Greene
Humboldt
Lester
Massena
Morning Sun
Scranton
Varina

2017-18

Coon Rapids
Corning
Decorah
Forest City
Glidden
Graettinger
Moville
Peterson
Plymouth
Wapello

2018-19

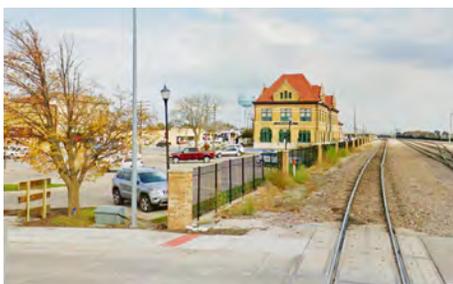
Audubon
Bedford
Coggon
Durant
Hinton
Royal
Sumner
Treyner
Van Meter
Walcott

2019-20

Avoca
Elkader
Fairfax
Lost Nation
Madrid
Mount Pleasant
Polk City
Reinbeck
Wellsburg

2020-21

Alleman
Calamus
Conrad
Emmetsburg
Malvern
Princeton
Shenandoah
Tama
Toledo
Wheatland



Historic depot, Creston.



Lincoln Highway streetscape, Lisbon.



Accessible sidewalk, Riverside.

2011-12

Calmar
Center Point
Chariton
Colo
Dyersville
Manning
Paullina
Perry
Schaller
Tabor
Tripoli
Villisca

2012-13

Amana Colonies
Gilmore City
Keota
Lake City
Mapleton
Ossian
Shellsburg

2013-14

Akron
Hanlontown
Huxley
Leon
New Providence
Oxford
Pocahontas
Preston
Sabula
Urbana

2014-15

Bondurant
Dunkerton
Elkhart
Fairfield
Nashua
Onawa
Osage
Riceville
Ringsted
Vail

2015-16

Carlisle
Colfax
Garrison
Hampton
Kalona
Manning
Monona
St. Ansgar
Stuart
University Heights



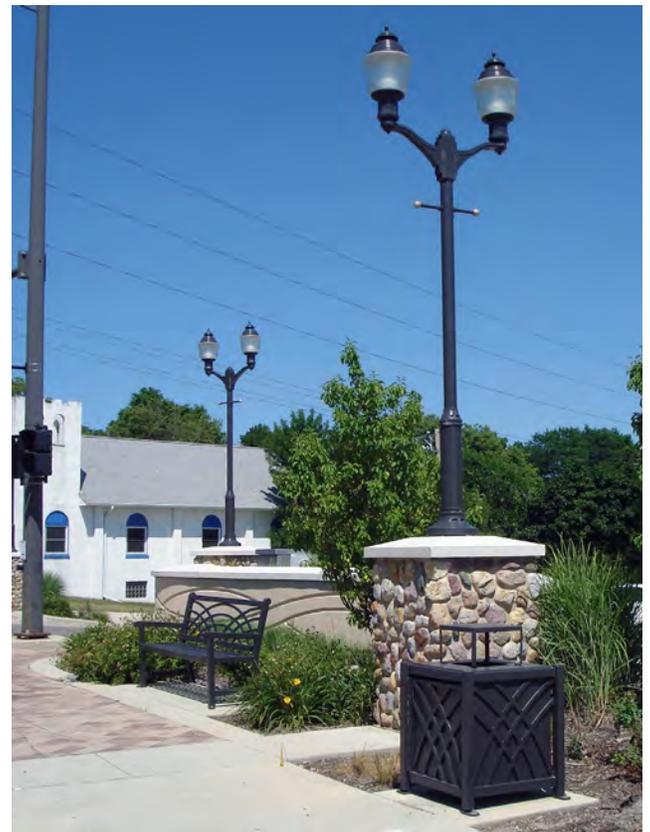
Accessible play equipment in Gateway Park along US 18 in Monona.

Arnolds Park

One of the first communities to participate in Community Visioning, Arnolds Park is also one of the most prolific in the form of Team WAVE (Willing Active Volunteers for the Environment), a nonprofit that resulted from the visioning process. Initially, Team WAVE addressed the widening of the US 71 corridor through town to ensure that the change was well coordinated and aesthetically pleasing for residents and visitors. Since then, the organization's volunteers have planted more than 107 trees, 275 shrubs and more than 2,200 perennials. Funding for Team WAVE has come from grants totaling \$82,500. Major funding partners for Team WAVE projects include Alliant Energy, Aquila and the Living Roadways Trust Fund. In kind donations total \$10,000. More than 2,900 volunteer hours have been devoted to designing projects, planting and maintaining beds, fundraising, grant writing and administrative work. Completed projects range from roadside plantings, street trees, and rain gardens to hardscaping and pedestrian amenities.



Volunteers from Arnolds Park present their success story during the 2004 Iowa's Living Roadways Celebration.



The downtown streetscape features pedestrian-scale lighting, decorative pavement, benches, and trash receptacles.

1996-97



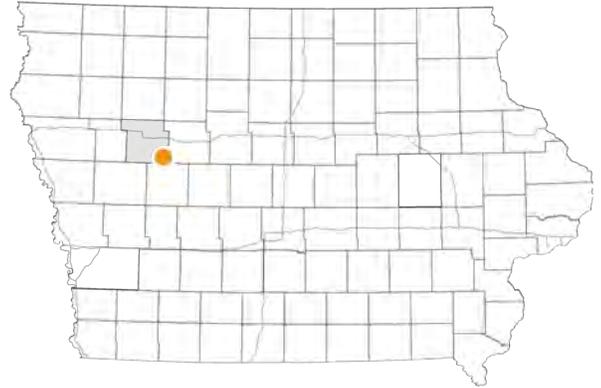
Top left: Rain garden project with educational signage. Top right: The native planting along US 71 was funded by the ILR Projects program. Middle left: Team WAVE planted these boulevard trees along West Broadway Street. Bottom left: Street trees along the US 71 corridor. Above: Planting along Lakeshore Drive.

Auburn

Anthropologist Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." She could have been referring to Auburn, a small town in Sac County.

Despite its hometown's diminutive size, the Auburn visioning committee dreamed big and accomplished much, including renovating the US 71 corridor through town to slow traffic and improve walkability. Three entrance signs, rain gardens to mitigate stormwater, and park improvements have also been completed. Part of the committee's success can be attributed to a significant contribution from Roy Reiman, a successful publisher who grew up in the area who learned about Community Visioning in Auburn and was impressed.

Reiman was quoted in local newspapers as saying, "It was obvious from reading this extensive study [visioning feasibility report] that this group had sat through a lot of meetings and had done a great deal of thinking."



"Without the [visioning] program, Auburn wouldn't be where [we] are today. The hardest part of getting anything done is getting started."



Volunteers plant flowers at Reiman Park.

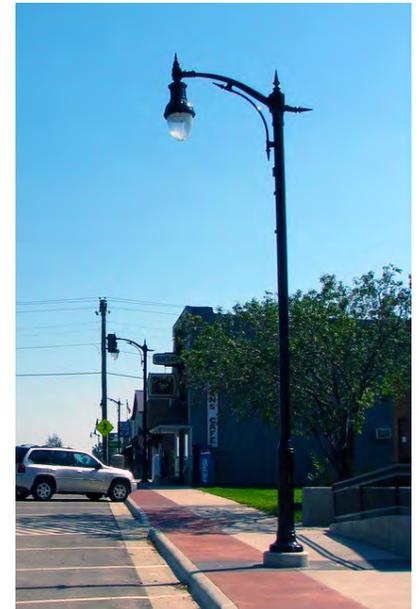
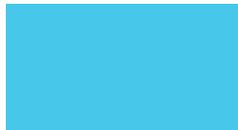


The signage and plantings at Reiman Park were completed as part of Auburn's visioning.

2006



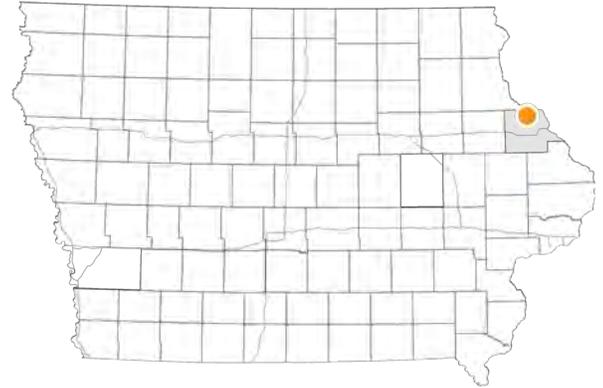
The entrance signs are constructed of stone native to the area.



US 71 corridor improvements include bump-outs to narrow the roadway and shorten pedestrian crossing distances, monument-style street signs, pedestrian-scale lighting, and vegetation.

Balltown

Balltown is a tiny northeast Iowa town a few miles northwest of Dubuque along County Road C9Y, which is designated as part of the Great River Road, the Mississippi River Trail (a national bike route) and a Scenic Byway. This community of fewer than 80 residents is situated on a bluff with a simply breathtaking view of the Mississippi River valley. Despite its small population, Balltown attracts increasingly greater numbers of tourists from all over the world each year. From the recently built scenic overlook, one can view the river bluffs in Wisconsin and beyond. The transportation survey conducted through the visioning process revealed that residents wanted to improve community entrances to better identify the town to its many visitors. The visioning committee has accomplished this goal, as well as enhancing the scenic overlook with interpretive signage and native prairie plants, in collaboration with Dubuque County Conservation.



Improvements to the scenic overlook in Balltown include several interpretive signs and native prairie plants between the retaining walls and the fence line in front of the overlook.

2007



Top left:: Gateway signage constructed from native limestone alerts visitors that they are entering this unique community. Top right and bottom: The prairie plants at the overlook add another layer of seasonal color.

Belle Plaine

The Belle Plaine visioning committee was very passionate about preserving its town's history as well as moving it forward. The committee's and local volunteers' strong attachment to their community is evidenced by the \$4.4 million they obtained through various grants to complete 10 projects. In addition to the projects shown here—developing Box Park and creating the Beautiful Plainses Prairie Park along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway (Highway 21)—the community completed entrance signage and landscaping, and planted trees and vegetation throughout town.



Projects in Box Park included a trail and a bioswale (left), and trees and native plants at the shelter house (right).

2008



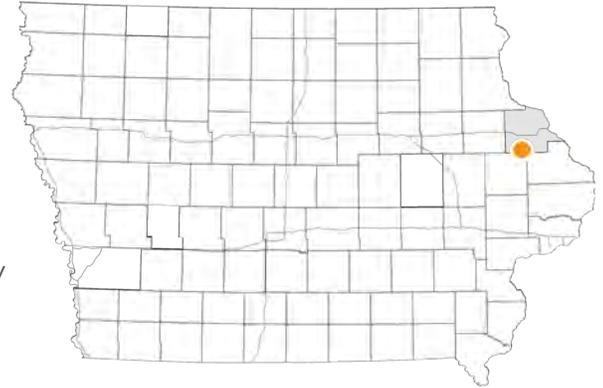
Built entirely by volunteers, Beautiful Plaines Prairie Park is a signature project of Belle Plaine's visioning process.

"The visioning process has spurred just the excitement and people seeing that they can make a difference. One of our members [said], '...if that's why it was named beautiful plains, we should have a prairie'... We didn't have any land, we didn't have any money, but we just started...it was just amazing—one baby step and then another step and another step and pretty soon we had this beautiful prairie..."

—Vicki Schwab

Cascade

Cascade participated in the US 151 Corridor pilot project in 2001 and Community Visioning in 2002. The new four-lane highway presented this small river town both challenges, such as reduced visibility to travelers, and opportunities to enhance the landscape. Local leaders and volunteers enthusiastically embraced the visioning process, completing projects including monument signs along the four-lane highway, roadside plantings at highway interchanges, accessible sidewalks with curb ramps, and Riverview Park development. When the committee went about forming a garden club to assist in planting projects, resident response was so great that the garden club became its own entity.



During the US 151 Corridor project, residents shared their stories, while the design team documented them on maps.



The Cascade visioning committee identifies cultural resources during the mapping meeting.



With the completion of the US 151 bypass, the community realized the importance of monument signage along the new four-lane highway.

2002



"[Community Visioning] has had a positive impact because the number of new houses and apartments has steadily increased. Also, many community members have thanked us and made positive remarks on our projects."



Improvements made to Riverview Park include (from top to bottom) a seating area, interpretive signage, and an amphitheater.

Seating areas throughout and curb ramps at intersections have made downtown Cascade accessible for people of all ages and physical abilities.

Clarksville

The Clarksville visioning committee is a case study in determination. Although the community had collaborated with the Butler County Conservation Board to develop the rolling Prairie Recreation Trail, had an established Trees Forever group, and a recently formed committee to promote healthy lifestyles, residents had what committee member Jeff Kolb described as "the mentality that this is just Clarksville."

The committee overcame residents' skepticism by publicizing every aspect of the process and personally inviting individuals and other local groups to attend meetings and workshops. Since participating in Community Visioning in 2010, the community has completed several projects, including a new entrance sign, an ADA-accessible crosswalk from the library to Reading Park, and enhancements to Reading Park. As a result of the visioning process, residents have become more invested in the community. For example, the two librarians take turns watering the annual planters in Reading Park, which is across from the library.



Clarksville Residents discuss transportation assets and barriers during a focus group.



Volunteers construct the Clarksville entrance sign at Highways 3 and 188.



In 2014, high school seniors requested that their class picture be taken at the entrance sign.

2010



Top left: The Reading Park band shell is a popular venue for community concerts. Top right: Overhead utility lines were buried and period lighting with banners installed at the park to improve aesthetics. Bottom left: Clarksville librarian Cindy Wedeking waters the planters in Reading Park. Bottom right: An ADA-accessible crosswalk connects the Clarksville Library to Reading Park.

"Visioning got us to dream big and consider projects we otherwise would have never thought of."

Decorah

Since it first participated in Community Visioning, Decorah has accomplished several projects that have improved quality of life for residents. Planting trees and native vegetation throughout the community has improved the outdoor environment, and the extensive Trout Run Trail system provides users a scenic recreation experience along the river, up and down the limestone bluffs, and even across the highway with a pedestrian overpass. In the 2018 iteration of the visioning process, the steering committee focused its efforts on making the community more accessible to users of all ages and abilities, addressing issues such as safe routes to school, traffic calming, way-finding, and connectivity. The East Water Street trail project is currently underway, with the construction of an accessible trailhead.



A native prairie along US Highway 52 at Luther College adds color and interest while providing pollinator habitat.

1998 & 2018



The plaza at the corner of East Water Street and Riverside Avenue serves as a trailhead for a trail to connect Trout Run Trail to downtown.



Amenities at the trailhead include seating, shade, a water station, and a soon-to-be-planted shade tree.

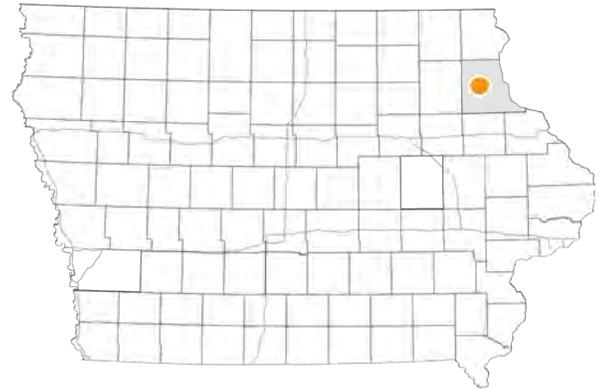


Through iconic limestone monument signs, carved by local stone carvers, and native vegetation, Decorah embraces its natural environment among towering limestone bluffs.

Elkader

On June 8, 2008, the Turkey River spilled out of its banks, causing a record flood event in Elkader. As a result, the city bought out more than 30 homes in the floodplain, creating a large open space.

As a 2009 visioning community, Elkader pursued multiple projects, including developing the 98-mile Turkey River Water Trail and improving river access, working toward trail connectivity, and developing Founders' Park. Finally, the community developed a river walk with handicapped-accessible access to the river. In 2020, Elkader repeated the visioning process, and the resulting concept plan builds on the previous one with proposed trail expansions, pedestrian bridges over the river, and additional green space enhancements.



"Founders' Park is a kind of centerpiece for the city of Elkader right now. We have numerous activities down here like Sweet Corn Days, Art in the Park is huge..."

—Bob Garms



Elkader residents value the river walk because it is a peaceful place for people to enjoy nature and the river.

2009 & 2020



Top and middle rows: Founders' Park provides walking trails, seating, a venue for community events, and native habitat for birds and pollinators. Bottom: The accessible river access allows more people to have easy access to the river.

Fairfield

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 Maharishi International University 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. Completed projects include entrance signage, tree and vegetation plantings, and pedestrian amenities.

"[What] pleased us the most [about the visioning process] was that we were able to involve such a great diversity of interests in the community. We were able to reach beyond the committee members and were able to get their support."



Top: Fairfield youth prepare to photograph assets and barriers during the 2015 focus group workshop. Bottom: Residents view the final concept plan proposed in 2003.

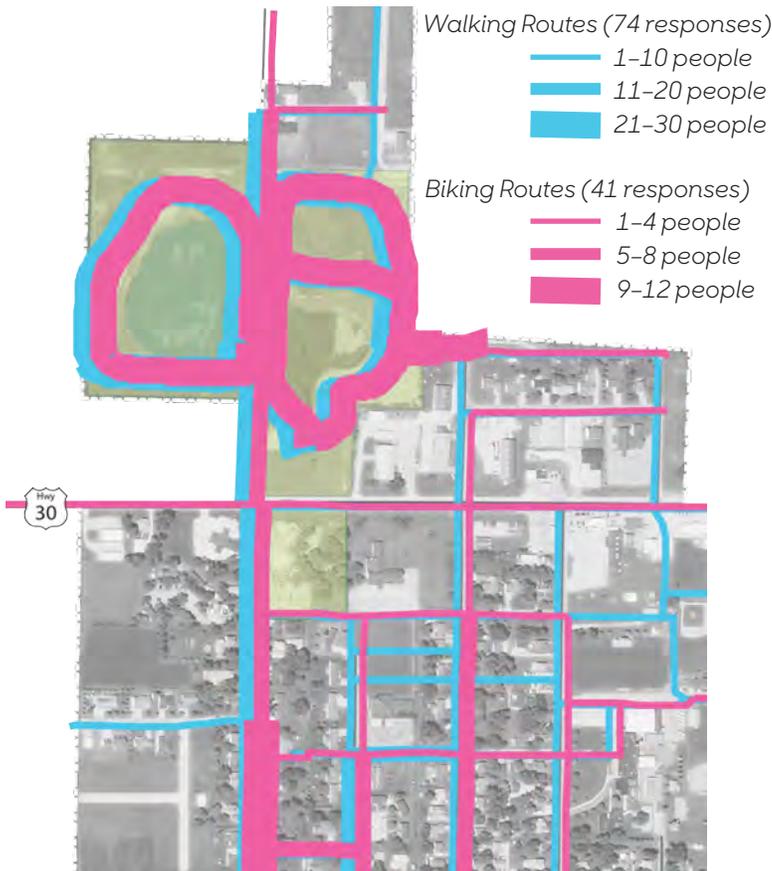
2003 & 2015



Top row: Plantings at Heritage Plaza (left) and entrance signage (right) were proposed during the 2003 visioning process. Middle row: The 2015 visioning process resulted in pedestrian crossing signals and crosswalks at 9th Street and Burlington Avenue (left) and a seating area in Central Park. Bottom: A pedestrian island proposed for the 4th Street and Highway 1 intersection in 2015 is in the planning stages.

Glidden

Like many Iowa communities, Glidden is bisected by a major highway, US 30. During the visioning process, the steering committee decided that improving safety along US 30 through town is a priority. Just two years later, a crossing signal and crosswalk were installed, creating a pedestrian/cyclist connection across US 30 between Northland Park and its trail and the aquatic center, a major achievement for a small community. A year later, in July 2021, a group of volunteers prepared the ground and poured concrete for a trail extension that connects Northland Park to the Merle Hay Memorial Cemetery, a popular walking venue among residents.



The results of the random-sample survey provided evidence of how heavily walkers (blue lines) and cyclists (pink lines) use the trail.



Workers install the flashing crossing signal along US 30 (photo by Larry Devine, Carroll Times Herald).

2018

"Cars...walking across highways, there [are] a lot of cars, and we can't always see them because of the hill."



"We like the trail. It would be used much more if there would be a proper way to cross there."



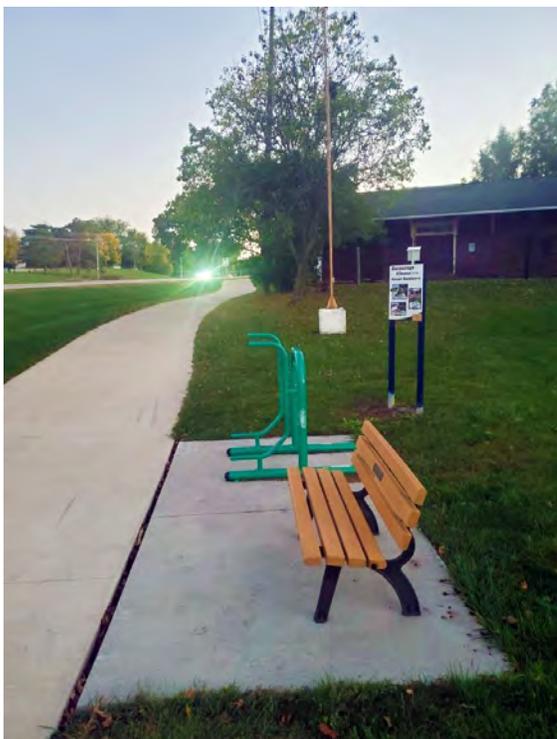
Left: Focus-group results revealed that residents wanted safer access to the Northland Park trail across US 30. Right: Workers paint the crosswalk over US 30 (photo by Larry Devine, Carroll Times Herald).



The pedestrian crossing signal and crosswalk were completed in 2020, giving pedestrians and cyclists a safer way to cross US 30 to access Northland Park and the trail from the aquatic center (photo by Larry Devine, Carroll Times Herald).

Hudson

When Hudson applied for Community Visioning, it already had trail connections between the downtown and Waterloo and Cedar Falls, but portions of the community remained disconnected. Three major highways intersect in Hudson, giving residents easy access to the larger cities nearby. However, Highway 63 and Highway 58 geographically divide Hudson, interrupting the safe flow of pedestrians and bicycles. In particular, youth had to cross Highway 63 either to get to school or to reach the sports fields. To address pedestrian/cyclist connectivity and safety issues, the visioning design team proposed extending the existing Sergeant Road Trail, as well as constructing an underpass on Highway 63 to provide a safe route to school for local youth. With a combination of grant applications and local fundraising, the ambitious visioning committee was able to fund the more than \$1 million project.

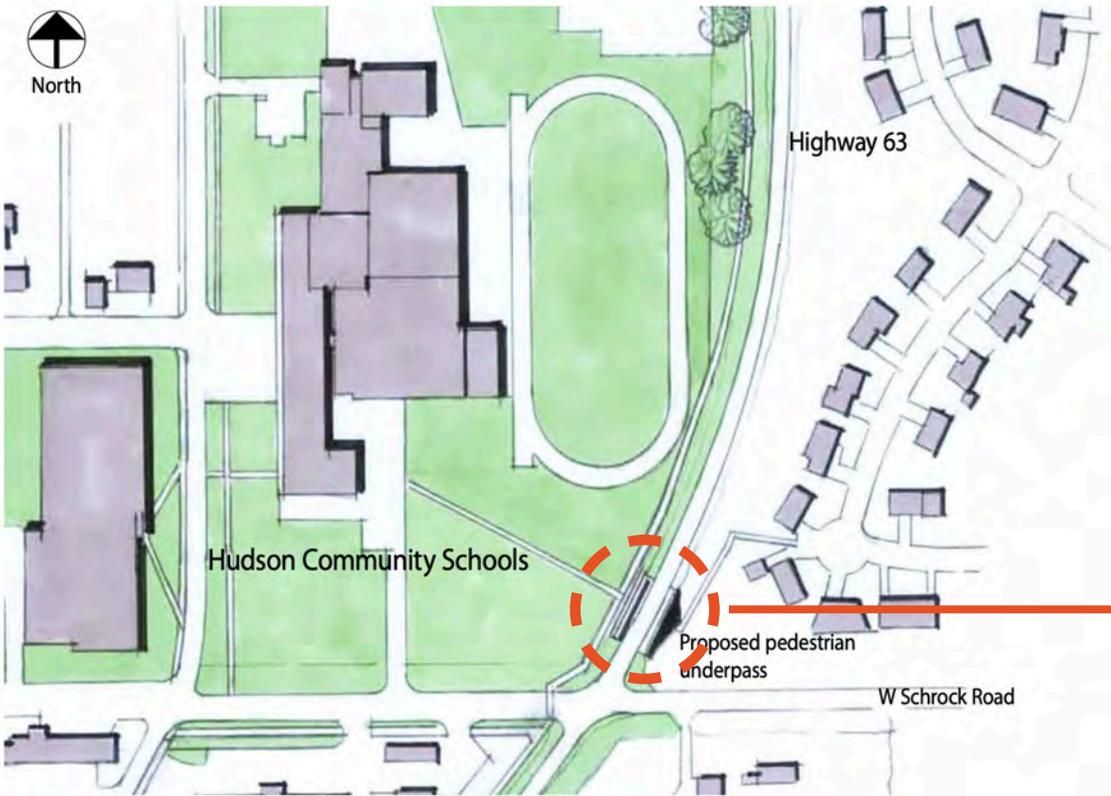


The Sergeant Road Trail extension connects to the Depot Museum, where seating and a bike station have been added.

"Having the core trail system in place will help drive growth. The trail will be a great selling point to get people to live here. The underpass [under Highway 63] will help kids get safely to school and is an important part of the trail."



2010



Proposed underpass along Highway 63



The Highway 63 project includes a 10-ft wide trail, a reinforced box culvert underpass, storm sewer, curb & gutter with slotted drain storm sewer, and utility relocation. The underpass is lit, making it safe to use during early morning and evening hours.

Humboldt

Humboldt applied for the 2017 visioning program with the goals of improving pedestrian connectivity and providing a safe way for cyclists and pedestrians to cross Highway 169 to access different community resources. Other ideas that emerged through visioning were improving accessibility in the downtown area, creating way-finding signage, and mitigating the dam for better river access. In 2020, the community completed its first project, an ambitious \$1.7 million central business district urban renewal project focusing on Sumner Avenue that addresses the downtown accessibility issues.

The city recently secured \$800,000 in funding from Pathfinders RPA for the Eagle Ridge Nature Trail and a pedestrian bridge across the West Branch of the Des Moines River. The bridge will connect the new trail to the existing Cottonwood Trail and provide safe connections from new residential developments on the west side of town to the business district, the elementary school, and to several parks. In the funding application, the city cites survey and focus-group data collected during the visioning process, as well as feedback from the design workshop and public presentation.



"The process definitely helped to bring into focus what our goals were, and what we needed to concentrate on in order to achieve them."



The new downtown streetscape includes wide sidewalks with ADA-accessible curb ramps, intersection bump-outs, and stormwater mitigation.

2017

"If there were a way to walk, bike, or whatever from Sheldon Park and get to anywhere you wanted to be in the city, I think it [would] open up our city so much more."



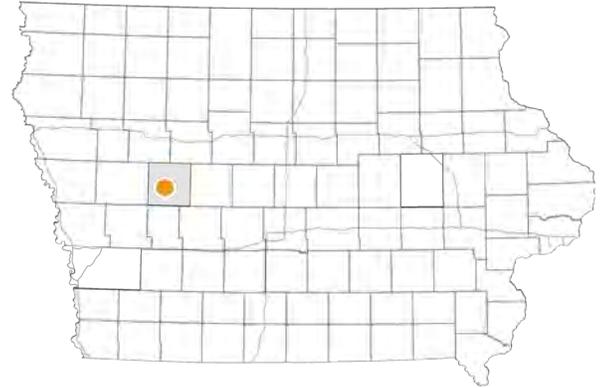
"It would be nice to connect [from Cottonwood Trail] all the way over to [Joe Sheldon County Park]."



Top left: Focus groups during the visioning process revealed the desire among residents for trail connections. Top right: The proposed Eagle Ridge Nature Trail would eventually connect with Joe Sheldon County Park. Middle: The city secured funding to construct a pedestrian bridge across the West Branch of the Des Moines River, and the Humboldt County Supervisors have agreed to contribute \$1,000,000 toward the project. Bottom: The existing Cottonwood Trail will be a major connector in Humboldt's trail plan.

Manning

The mighty little community of Manning has taken place-making to a new level since first embarking on Community Visioning in 2012. The 2012 process resulted in a community identity reflected in signage, art, and banners throughout town. With help from local volunteers and businesses, monument signage and trails were constructed and native vegetation planted along the Highway 141 corridor. In 2016, this tenacious group of volunteers established a downtown green space adjacent to Highway 141, additional trail connections, and Trestle Park, a new park located on a former mill site near a railroad trestle bridge. The new park features trails connecting to the main trail system, water access to the Nishnabotna River, a shelter, play area, sand volleyball court, and public art.



"Community Visioning was a method to get volunteers, and new volunteers, engaged in a new way. Manning has become known as a community that gets this done!"



Volunteers assemble the east (top) and west (bottom) entrance signs.



The east entrance sign along Highway 141 captures elements of Manning's identity, including the water tower and the trestle bridge.

2012 & 2016



Volunteers pour concrete for a new section of trail connecting to the sports fields.



The signaled highway crossing, paved trail, and pedestrian bridge provide a safe, accessible recreation venue.



The new Trestle Park features way-finding signage, connections to the community trail, and public art.



The concept for Trestle Park incorporates a railroad theme with a depot-style shelter, along with public art celebrating Iowa.

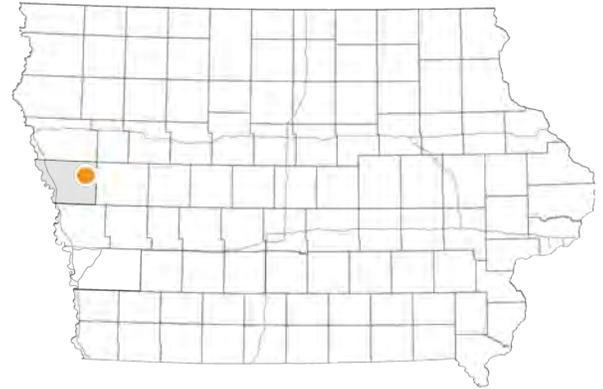
Mapleton

On April 9, 2011, the lives of residents in Mapleton, Iowa, were changed forever. That evening, an EF4 tornado with winds up to 165 miles per hour tore through the community. The tornado damaged 60 percent of the town, destroying 46 homes, 21 businesses, and 1,500 trees. Despite the overwhelming devastation, residents worked together to clean up their community and to move forward. In 2013, the town's Rebuild and Recover Committee turned to Community Visioning for assistance in long-term planning. The visioning process revealed the importance of outdoor recreation to residents, as well as serious drainage issues in the Westside District that were impeding both rebuilding and healthy activity in that area.

With the visioning concept plan in hand, a remarkable group of volunteers aggressively pursued project implementation and completed a safe route to school, planted dozens of trees, constructed bioswales and bioretention cells, and created the Carhart Recreation Area and Arthur Carhart Trail along the Maple River.

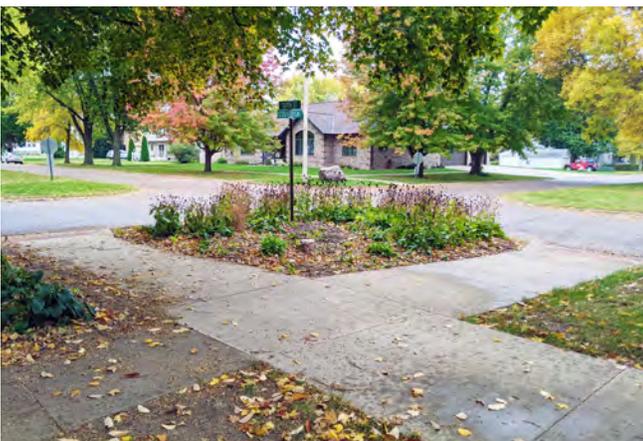
"Without community visioning we would have had no idea where to start...we learned and we know now where we need to go for grants, who can write those grants. We know how to reach out for help."

—Marie Whiteing



Volunteers work with landscape architects from Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company to construct bioswales and bioretention cells.

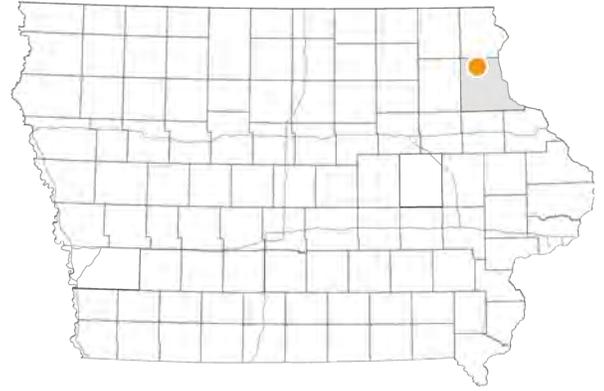
2013



Top: The Arthur Carhart Trail provides a peaceful, beautiful place for residents to enjoy nature. Middle: The northern trailhead of the Arthur Carhart Trail serves as a stormwater BMP (best management practices) park that includes a series of bioswales with two walking bridges. Bottom: Wider sidewalks with curb ramps were part of an effort to create a safe route to school.

Monona

Monona first took part in Community Visioning in 2007, completing most of its projects, with the most visible being landscaping and tree plantings at Gateway Park located along US 18. In 2016, the community decided to repeat the process and since then the visioning committee has inspired residents to volunteer time, talent, and equipment to complete an amazing number of large-scale projects, including a trail extension, ADA-accessible restrooms in both City Park and Gateway Park, new trailheads, an ADA-accessible playground in Gateway Park, downtown streetscape enhancements, way-finding signage, and the restoration of the historic bandstand in City Park. The visioning committee maintains a strong presence on Facebook, using its page to post works in progress and completed projects, as well as volunteer opportunities.



Volunteers mount the metal banners downtown (left) and pave the Butterfly Trail extension (right).

Top: Monona resident Ron Hill constructs a kiosk at the new trailhead. Bottom: volunteers assemble the play equipment in Gateway Park.

2007 & 2016

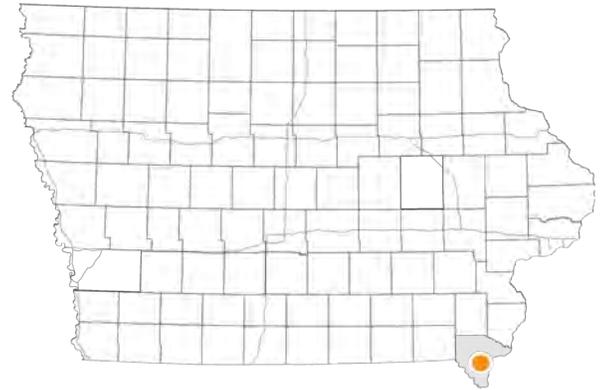


Top left: Way-finding signage was the first 2016 visioning project completed. Top right: Volunteers pose after planting flowers in the new Main Street planters. Middle left: The new trailhead features a kiosk and seating. Middle right: The Butterfly Garden provides habitat for Monarch butterflies. Bottom: The school band plays at the band shell ribbon cutting.

Montrose

Montrose is located along the Mississippi River in Lee County, along the Great River Road Scenic Byway. In its heyday, Montrose was home to many factories and businesses. Much activity was created by the Mississippi River, as many boats stopped in Montrose to unload or load because of the river's shallow rapids. However, after the construction of a government canal, boats no longer stopped in Montrose.

During the visioning process, the steering committee decided that it wanted to capitalize on Montrose's river heritage by refurbishing the riverfront area. A group of volunteers formed Montrose Riverfront, Inc., which set to work developing a former elevator site along the river based on the concept designs developed during Community Visioning. Over the course of 10 years, the group refurbished one building into the Riverfront Pavilion, a bright red structure that resembles a barn and serves as the home of Montrose's farmers market, transformed a second building into a museum, and built a large observation deck.



Vegetation, seating, and brick walkways are some of the amenities along the restored riverfront area.

2004



The Riverfront Pavilion provides a venue for community events, including the farmers market.



A RAGBRAI rider enjoys the view of the Mississippi River from the observation deck.



The observation deck located on the south side of Riverside Pavilion has seating and binoculars.

Parkersburg

Since first completing the community visioning process in 1999, Parkersburg experienced two major changes. In 2003, US Highway 20 was relocated five miles south of town, reducing daily traffic volumes on State Highway 14/17 (the old US 20 corridor) from 6,300 to 3,800. Five years later, on May 25, 2008, an EF5 tornado ripped through the southern half of the town, destroying numerous houses and businesses, two banks, and the high school, as well as obliterating earlier tree plantings along the Highway 14/57 corridor.

Despite such a dramatic setback, residents worked together to clean up their community and move forward. The city formed a committee to develop a strategic recovery plan, of which the Parkersburg visioning committee was a part. With funding from FEMA and the Iowa DOT, the community completed a \$3.5 million complete streets project that addresses stormwater management, an off-street trail, and pedestrian/cyclist amenities, that according to visioning committee members, has improved residents' quality of life.



Establishing a prairie at the Depot Park was an objective that emerged from the 1999 visioning process.



The downtown streetscape was a visioning proposal from 1999 and was not damaged by the tornado.

1999 & 2009



"One of the most beneficial things in regards to visioning was outside experts coming to Parkersburg and taking our concept plan and adding to it with their expertise and making concept plans that were far beyond our imagination."

—Chris Luhring

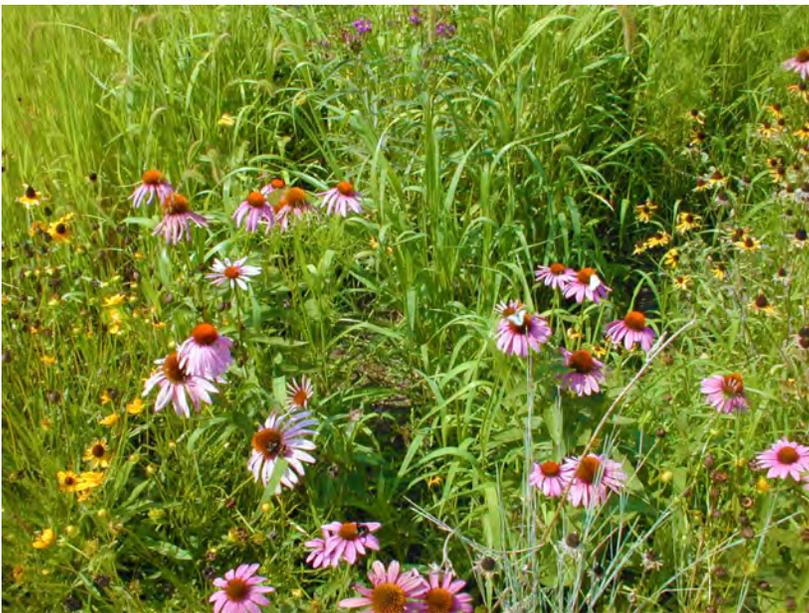
Amenities such as seating, vegetation, and lighting along the recreation trail have a positive impact on residents' community attachment.



The landscape design for the Highway 14/57 corridor through Parkersburg includes curb ramps, crosswalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, and vegetation.

Rudd

Rudd is a resilient little community located along the Avenue of the Saints between Mason City and Charles City in northern Iowa. The town experienced the farm crisis of the late 1980s and another crisis when the local school closed in 1991. Despite these difficulties, residents rallied and completed a number of positive projects in the past several years, such as forming the Rudd Community Betterment Corporation, which purchased the former school building and creating the Rudd Gym and Family Center. In constructing the Avenue of the Saints, the Iowa DOT built an overpass over the railway, and to have enough fill, created a 22-acre borrow lake in Rudd. The city acquired the lake in exchange for maintaining a portion of Highway 18 to be abandoned upon completion of the Avenue of the Saints. Through the visioning process, the Rudd steering committee realized the importance of outdoor open spaces and activity venues, and has completed the Rudd Butterfly Garden and a multi-use trail around the borrow lake.



The native prairie planting in the butterfly garden is low maintenance and provides habitat for birds and pollinators.

1998



A cyclist rests in the gazebo in the Rudd Butterfly Garden.



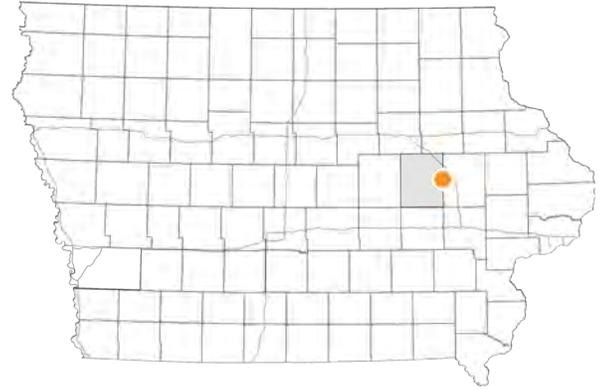
The picnic table provides a shady spot for visitors to share a meal together.



The multi-use trail in East Park loops around Rudd Lake (the borrow lake) and connects into town.

Shellsburg

Shellsburg is an excellent example of how effective community engagement can inspire residents and create a strong sense of place. Within three years of completing the visioning process, Shellsburg completed four major projects, including two trails, downtown streetscaping, and stream bank stabilization. The value and community sentiment that residents feel for Shellsburg was clearly evident in the process of building these projects. Volunteers did much of the clean up and construction for the projects, and a local farmer donated time and equipment to the Prairie Forest Trail project. The town's participation in the program was spearheaded by the Shellsburg Area Community Group (SACG), which continues to support visioning projects and engages with residents from all walks of life.



Top left: Volunteers of all ages contribute to the stream bank stabilization project. Top right: The completed stream bank stabilization project. Bottom right: The downtown streetscape project included bump-outs with curb ramps and decorative, pedestrian-scale lighting.

"We got everybody from senior citizens to high school kids on various committees and we got input from everybody and it made it very successful."

— Danny Roehr



2013



Top: Volunteers pave the Memorial Park Trail. Middle: A local farmer donated equipment for the completion of the Prairie Forest Trailhead. Bottom: Volunteers construct the trail bridge along Prairie Forest Trail.

The completed trail in Memorial Park. Middle: Volunteers gather under the completed Prairie Forest Trailhead sign. Bottom: The completed trail bridge along Prairie Forest Trail.

Storm Lake

Storm Lake encompasses the entire north shore of a beautiful 3,200-acre lake, the third largest in the state. The community applied to the visioning program to address a major change to the transportation system—the US 71 bypass, which diverts travelers to a route approximately two miles outside the city. The visioning committee explored the idea of creating a “gateway” leading toward the community from a prominent intersection along the bypass to entice visitors, and the design team delivered with a concept for what is now an iconic landmark along US 71. The community also incorporated street trees, plantings, and landscaping in the downtown area.



The downtown streetscape in Storm Lake features street trees, vegetation, and pedestrian amenities.

1998



The lighthouse along the US 71 corridor alerts drivers that they are near the community.

Tripoli

Tripoli is located in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls metropolitan area. The community offers its residents a strong school system, local downtown businesses and a nature refuge in the Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area, a 2,855-acre public area located just outside the city limits of Tripoli. Visitors or residents can escape to the serenity of the Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area to enjoy fishing, hunting and watching wildlife. Sweet Marsh is known as one of the best bird watching areas in Iowa.

Tripoli took part in Community Visioning in 2012 and in only four years completed six projects focused primarily on developing a trail to Sweet Marsh. This significant achievement was done mostly with volunteer labor and donated equipment, demonstrating the strong place attachment residents feel for their community.

"The biggest impact and benefit of visioning is the change in residents' attitudes. There is a feeling of optimism and people know they can get things done."

—Jay Raynard



Volunteers construct the gazebo at the trailhead.



Top: Youth assemble picnic tables for the trailhead. Bottom: Volunteers used donated equipment to pave the trail.

2012



Approximately 90 people volunteered their time and services to complete the welcome center located at the Sweet Water Trail trailhead on the site of an old convenience store and gas station.



The gazebo park is located adjacent to the welcome center and along the Sweet Water Trail.

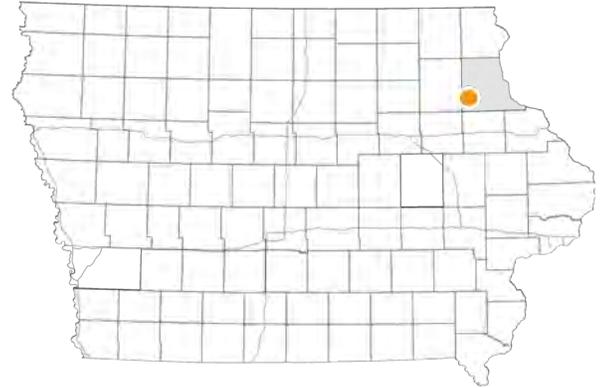


The sidewalk added along Highway 93 to the convenience store created a safe route for youth to walk.

Volga

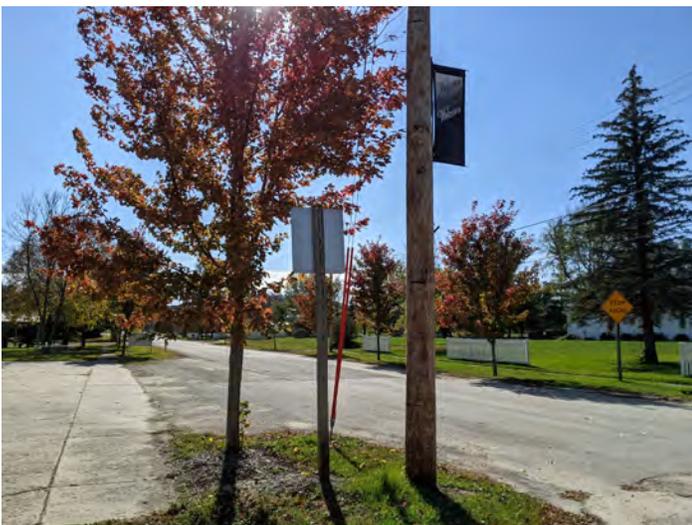
The town of Volga is situated within the floodplain of the Volga River, which is the community's most significant natural resource not only for its beauty and recreational opportunities, but also because of the difficulties caused by flooding. Nearly 40 homes were lost in a 1999 flood, creating a large green space. In need of direction for developing this space, Volga applied to Community Visioning.

Through determination and creativity, the community completed several projects, including planting trees along the entry corridor, narrowing the main street and adding additional trees, expanding the existing prairie, planting a white pine grove in the green space, and installing a dramatic limestone entrance sign with a water feature. The committee was able to accomplish these projects with few resources by recruiting volunteer labor and seeking out donated supplies and equipment whenever possible. While some communities may find the scope and cost of certain projects daunting, Volga kept pushing forward to get things done.



"[Community Visioning] has changed our community. It has galvanized people to volunteer and to be part of the beautification process. It has in many ways put the name of our town on the map in a positive way..."

—Elaine Follon



The tree planting on Washington Street involved narrowing the street to accommodate trees on both sides.

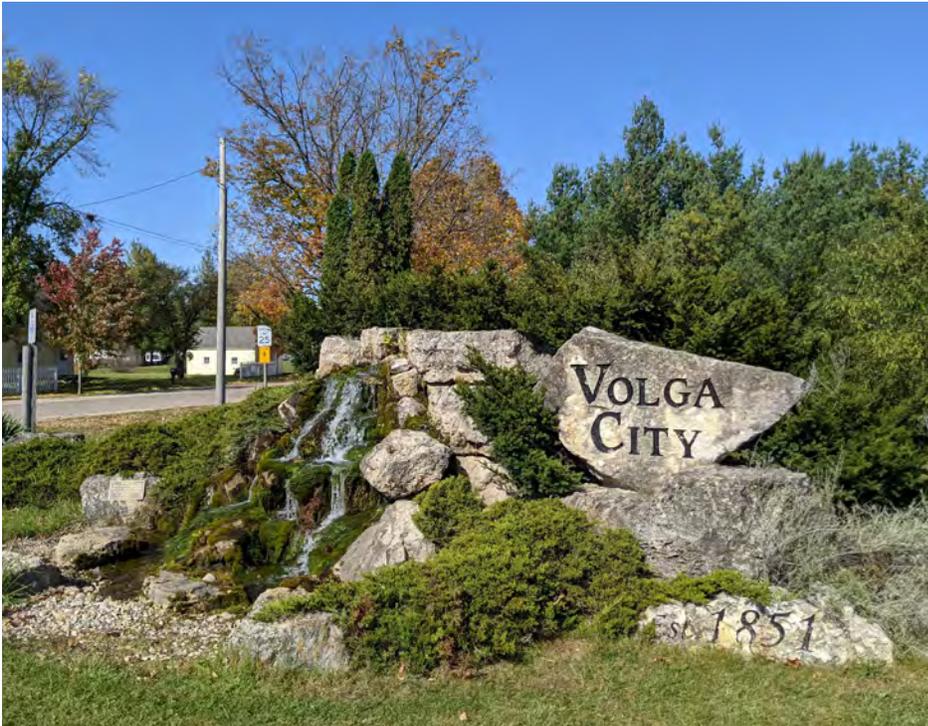


The expanded Volga Wildlife Management Area.

2004



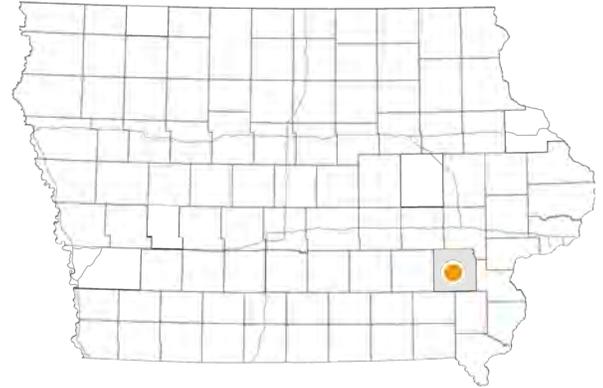
Volunteers build the entrance sign using donated equipment and limestone.



The Volga City entrance sign in October 2021.

Washington

The town of Washington, which was founded in 1839, has been rated as one of the best 100 small towns in America. Washington has more than 100 social and service clubs and organizations, a local newspaper and a radio station, and a number of activities and attractions. The Washington visioning committee, led by then county economic development director Ed Raber, had ambitious goals, particularly for the town's historic downtown district. The community completely renovated the downtown streetscape, including Central Park, to be more pedestrian friendly, adopted a new community logo, installed entrance signage, and planted roadside vegetation.



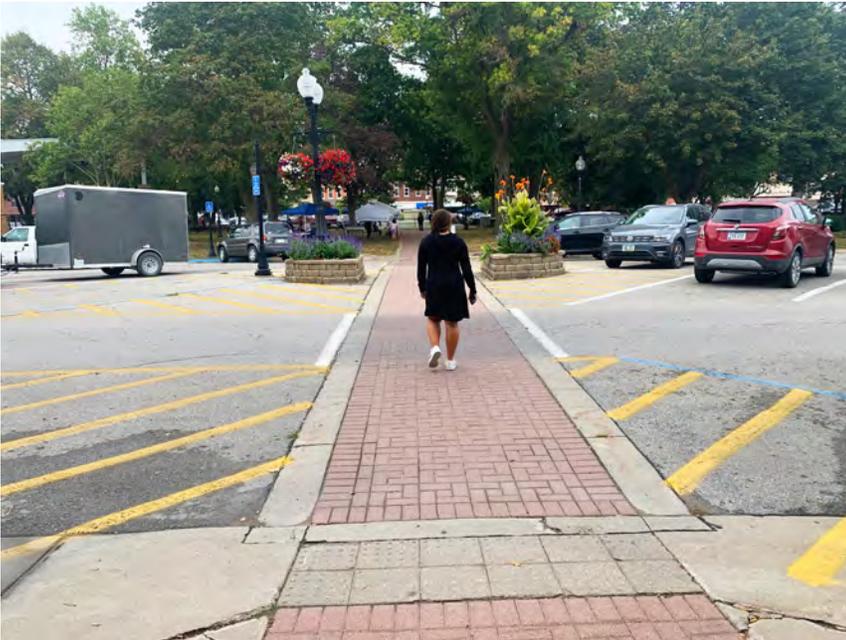
"What Community Visioning did was not make [the streetscape project] one person's idea, or few people's idea, but made it the community's idea, and that helped us implement it."

—Ed Raber



The Washington visioning committee recognized that visitors had difficulty finding their way downtown. The design team proposed concepts for a gateway into downtown on Highway 92.

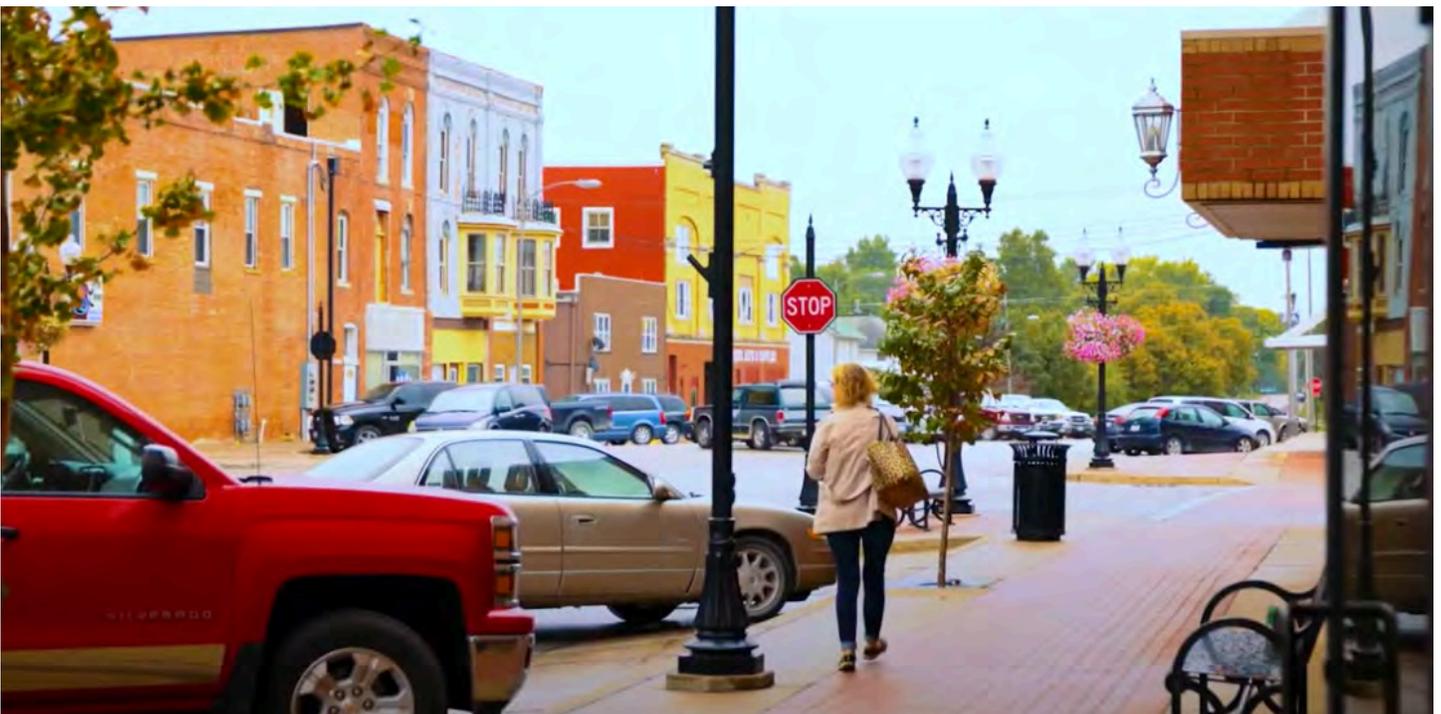
2005



Mid-block bump-outs and crosswalks make it easier for pedestrians to access Central Park in downtown Washington.



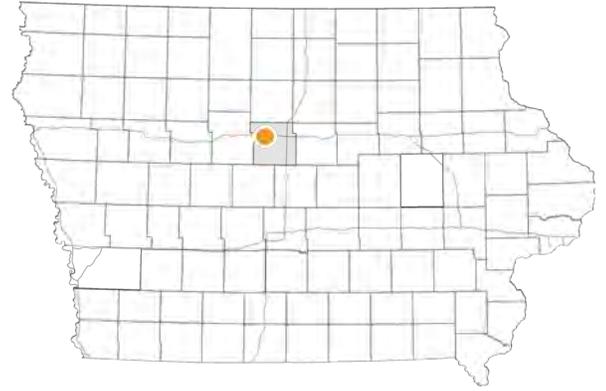
Residents enjoy an evening "pop-up movie" at the amphitheater in Central Park.



Elements of the multi-million dollar downtown streetscape project include decorative, pedestrian-scale lighting, brick sidewalks and crosswalks, bump-outs, seating, and vegetation.

Webster City

In 2008, Webster City was already in the process of making improvements, with one major project being the downtown streetscape. Through Community Visioning, this proactive community identified several new projects. With help from the PRIDE committee and service clubs such as the Rotary, the community has installed four new gateway signs and landscaping at community entrances, created and implemented a way-finding signage system, installed accessible walkways in Wilson Brewer Park, and completed improved landscaping of the Boulevard of Valor.



"[Community Visioning] gave a different view of what could be done. It seemed overwhelming, but this helped out."



Residents attended survey workshops during which they took an online transportation survey as part of the community assessment process.



Webster City installed four new gateway signs at community entrances.

2008



The way-finding system directs visitors to popular destinations such as the Boone River Recreation Trail.



The Wilson Brewer Park is the burial site for family members of the community's founders and the location of several historic buildings.

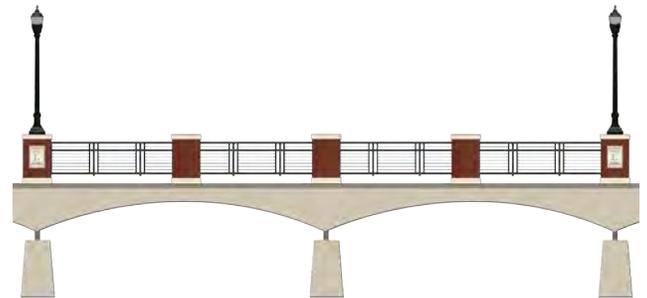


The Wilson Brewer Park master plan included the addition of accessible sidewalks to sites such as the depot (left) and the log cabins (right).

Woodbine

Woodbine is located in western Iowa, on the west side of the Boyer River and north of US 30. The historic Lincoln Highway, a major thoroughfare through Woodbine, is the largest remnant of the original transcontinental US 30 in Iowa. Before participating in Community Visioning in 2008, this ambitious town was already involved in several programs, including Horizons, Main Street Iowa, and Green Initiatives. The community had renovated its school building, updated its main street, and installed new playground equipment in City Park. It has also made efforts to preserve many architectural artifacts of its history. The Woodbine visioning committee used the visioning process to build on these ideas.

The most prominent feature in Woodbine is the iconic grain elevator, which was in danger of demolition. Through visioning, the local committee decided to pursue installing public art on the elevator and using the visioning concept plan, successfully funded and completed the project. A second major project—the US 30 bridge over the Boyer River—was completed by the Iowa DOT, which agreed to incorporate some of the visioning concepts into the bridge design. Other projects realized include way-finding signage, street trees, and decorative lighting and banners.



The US 30 bridge over the Boyer River incorporates elements of the visioning concept shown in the top image, including decorative lighting and brick work.

2008

"The public art on our grain elevator accelerated and inspired other art in our downtown and around town."

– Deb Sprecker

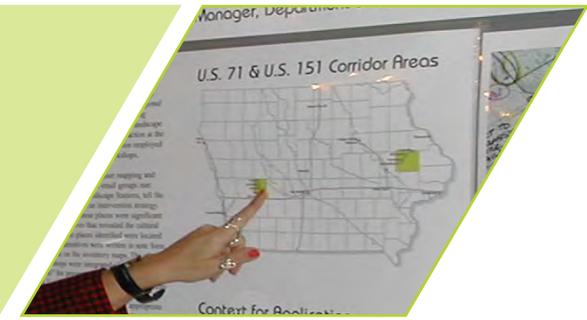


Way-finding signage directs visitors to local destinations while creating a sense of community identity.

"We had a lot of good projects come out of our community visioning but it's also given the community confidence in the future."

– Deb Sprecker





Partners

Iowa Department of Transportation

In 1996, the Iowa DOT's then chief landscape architect Mark Masteller facilitated a partnership with ISU Landscape Architecture Extension and Trees Forever to apply for competitive funding to provide transportation design services to small rural towns throughout Iowa and funds to build the projects envisioned. Using the planning framework developed by then Extension landscape architect Julia Badenhope and the model of facilitating community project-building envisioned by Shannon Ramsey of Trees Forever, the team was successful in a statewide funding competition.

Initially located in the Highway Division under director Mitch Dillavou, the program migrated to the Office of Location and Environment overseen by Harry Budd and Mark Kerper, and later by Stuart Anderson, director of the Planning, Programming and Modal Division.

Over the years, Iowa DOT has continued to invest in the program through federal and state resources, supporting small rural community transportation action and supporting rural vitality. By emphasizing democratic decision-making, volunteer action, professional education, and preservation of natural and historical resources, the Iowa DOT has transformed the rural transportation investment model from one entirely dependent on state and local tax dollars to one that is supported by local volunteer efforts and fundraising.

Today multi-modal design and accessibility for all users is at the forefront of transportation discussions. There has also been a greater emphasis placed on the relationship between natural systems and built roadway infrastructure and their impact on each other, with the pressures of changing weather patterns and rural road use.



Throughout this time, the Iowa's Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF) has been an important partner, initially providing the cost share required to secure the competitive federal grant. Those funds leveraged other federal funds for project development until 2015.

LRTF was established in 1988 through the REAP act, with the intent of investing at local, county, and state levels in planting, training, equipment, and research necessary to cultivate naturalized roadsides. Because roadsides account for a significant amount of Iowa's public lands, this effort is crucial to support pollinator habitat and clean water. A major goal for the Iowa DOT's LRTF program is to promote and educate the public about the need for an integrated approach to managing the vegetation along Iowa's roadsides. This approach ensures that roadside vegetation is preserved, planted, and maintained to create stormwater and water quality benefits, habitat for some animal species, and create visual interest.

Iowa DOT Current Team Members

Stuart Anderson

Director of the Planning, Programming, and Modal Division

Deb Arp

Grant Team Leader, Systems Planning

Mitchell Dillavou

Director, Highway Administration

Seana Godbold

Chief Landscape Architect

Craig Markley

Director, Systems Planning

Tara Van Waus

Living Roadway Trust Fund Coordinator

Iowa DOT Past Team Members

Harry Budd

Former Director, Office of Project Planning

Steve Holland

Former Living Roadway Trust Fund Coordinator

Mark Kerper

Former Design Engineer, Office of Location and Environment

Mark Masteller

Former Chief Landscape Architect

Troy Siefert

Former Living Roadway Trust Fund Coordinator



"We have a DOT that wants to be involved with communities as they're developing projects and wants to make sure they have success. They continue to be a great partner, continue to fund this program so it really helps that they're involved and continue to want to be involved."

— Brad Riphagen

Trees Forever



Trees Forever is an Iowa-based non-profit, founded in 1989, with a mission to plant and care for trees and the environment by empowering people, building community, and promoting stewardship. It completes this work through cutting-edge programs and innovative practices. The trained and experienced staff assist community leaders and landowners across Iowa and Illinois with thousands of planning and planting projects all in the effort of making communities green, vibrant places to live.

For 25 years, one of Trees Forever's cornerstones has been our Iowa's Living Roadways programs. Made up of Community Visioning, Iowa's Living Roadways Projects (retired program), Trails Visioning, Living Roadways Trust Fund Community Assistance, and Stewards of the Beautiful Land, these

programs have a central goal—make roadsides and trailsides functional and beautiful.

Through the Community Visioning program, Trees Forever has the pleasure of collaborating with the Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa State University, and private landscape architects on a process that encourages visionary and strategic thinking about transportation improvements in smaller Iowa communities.

Trees Forever's field coordinators and other support staff serve as facilitators and the central "hub" for each community that completes the process. It is a great honor to be part of each community's journey as they recognize what makes their town great and aligning that with change and action for the future.

Trees Forever Current Team

Shannon Ramsay
Founder & Trustee

Kiley Miller
President & CEO

Nancy Duncan
Executive Vice President &
CFO

Leslie Berckes
Director of Programs

Margaret Birmingham
Finance & Operations
Manager

John Bright
Marketing &
Communications Manager

Tracy Feldmann
Database & Website
Coordinator

Jeff Jensen
Field Coordinator

Dixie Noska
Program & Board
Administrative Coordinator

Patty Reisinger
Field Coordinator

Brad Riphagen
Field Coordinator

Deb Roman
Program Support
Coordinator

Molly Walkner
Field Coordinator

Past Team Members

Field Coordinators

Chris Bair

Meredith Borchardt

Aaron Brewer

Karen Brook

Del Christensen

Jean Eells

Steve Estlund

Barb Grabner-Kerns

Cheri Grauer

Michele Grinnell Mork

Dustin Hinrichs

Hannah Howard

Roger Hunt

Pamela Krug Helfer

Mark Pingenot

Emily Swihart

Carole Teator

Cheyann Thunberg

Roadways Staff

Gail Barels

Carl Barnhart

Susan Brady

Carla Rickels

Alida Selim

Chelsey Yates

Iowa State University

Community and Economic Development (CED) Extension

Institute for Design Research and Outreach (IDRO)

Department of Landscape Architecture

Iowa State University is where the “vision” for Community Visioning began. The observations of Julia Badenhope about gaps in design assistance available to Iowa’s rural towns spurred conversations with the Iowa DOT and Trees Forever about future collaboration. To get things up and running at the university takes a dedicated and thoughtful team. Badenhope relied on the expertise and mentorship of Dr. Timothy O. Borich, then a regional specialist and later the director of Community and Economic Development Extension and Outreach (CED); and J. Timothy Keller, then chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture. These programs still play a vital role in keeping the program relevant and connected with local Iowans. In its most recent update to its strategic plan, the Department of Landscape Architecture has put forth a primary goal of being leaders in design for rural landscapes and communities. The Community Visioning program is the embodiment of this goal and a beacon showcasing a major success for the department in this field to date.

Over 25 years the program has grown and evolved, folding in engaged research methods, dynamic map-based analysis, and more accessible design representation. This evolution has led to internal collaborations and working relationships at ISU that benefit the program. Christopher J. Seeger has been

a crucial contributor to our understanding of health and participatory GIS practices. Nora Ladjahasan, research scientist for the Institute for Design Research and Outreach (IDRO), assists with interpretation of data and early survey designs for larger Iowa communities. Robin McNeely, manager of ISU’s GIS facility and an alumna of the Landscape Architecture Department has advised the program on methods for interpreting map-based survey data and facilitated transcription of maps. The team from the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology has been invaluable in helping implement surveys on an ongoing basis. In the field, county extension directors and CED staff recruit, mentor, and assist in facilitation of community groups.

The program has always valued a collaborative design process populated with students and practitioners, many of whom are graduates of our program. As a group, we strive to create a welcoming environment that invites participation and empowerment of rural residents. The visioning program embodies the land grant mission, striving to provide meaningful educational experiences to all, creating new knowledge through participatory research and engaged design. Cited as one of ISU’s top 150 innovations, the Community Visioning Program exemplifies the work ethic, values, and commitment to making Iowa, and the world, a better place.

Community Visioning Team

Julia Badenhope

Professor and Program Director

Sandra Oberbroeckling

Program Specialist & Project Manager

Chad Hunter

Landscape Architecture Outreach Studio Manager

Erin Weitzl

Court Reporter

Megan Hassel

Court Reporter

College of Design

Luis Rico-Gutierrez

Dean

Carl Rogers

Department Chair, Landscape Architecture

Extension CED

Abbie Gaffey

Community Development Specialist

Bailey Hanson

GIS Systems Analyst

Christopher J. Seeger

Professor & Extension Landscape Architect

Rakesh Shah

Systems Analyst

Gary Taylor

Professor and Program Director

Scott Timm

Community Development Specialist

Aimee Viniard-Weidman

Community Development Specialist



Julia Badenhope (seated on left) facilitates a mapping exercise in the early days of Community Visioning.



Nora Ladjahasan helps a resident take the online transportation survey in Laurens.



Nora Ladjahasan
Research Scientist

Nora has been a scientist in the ISU College of Design's Institute for Design Research and Outreach since 1997. She first became involved with Community Visioning in 2002 to assist with program evaluations, of which she has done many. Her role later expanded in 2005 when she helped program staff create and conduct the first random-sample surveys of visioning communities. She has analyzed survey data for countless communities since then. When commuting, walking, and biking routes were added to the survey, Nora painstakingly transcribed them into a digital format that client communities could understand. Nora's generosity with her time and talent have only made the visioning program better by helping program staff understand how it impacts rural communities.

Institute for Design Research and Outreach

Kevin Kane

Associate Dean for Research and Outreach

Nora Ladjahasan

Research Scientist

Robin McNeely

GIS Facility Manager

Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology

Mallary Allen

Survey Research Services Director

Allison Anderson

Project Manager

Anthony Connor

Project Manager

Ellen McIntosh

Project Manager

Past Team Members

Jeff Benson

Community Visioning Project Manager

Tim Borich

Associate Professor & Former Program Director, Extension CED

Erin (Conway) Carpenter

Community Visioning Program Assistant

Eric Christianson

Community Development Specialist, Extension CED

Susan Erickson

Program Specialist, IDRO

Jody Fox

Project Manager, CSSM

Matthew Gordy

Community Visioning Studio Director

Mary Swalla Holmes

Facilitator

Alan Jensen

Community Development Specialist, Extension CED

J. Timothy Keller

Professor & Former Department Chair, Landscape Architecture

Janice Larson

Survey Unit Manager, CSSM

Paola Sepulveda

Community Visioning Program Coordinator

Jon Wolseth

Assistant Program Director, Extension CED



J. Timothy Keller

Founding Principal, Land and Community Associates

Tim Keller joined the ISU Landscape Architecture Department as internationally recognized community designer and cultural landscape preservation expert. His early work included a plan for the Amana Colonies that provided the basis for their application to become a national historic landmark. During the formation of the visioning program, Tim shared his experience in working with agencies and partners and provided ongoing advice as the program evolved. He spearheaded the community visioning transportation planning process in the Amana Colonies in 2013. Tim left ISU in 2007 to pursue projects in Virginia and spend time with his family. He is currently the chair of the Albemarle County, Virginia, Planning Commission and also serves on the county's Fiscal Impact Advisory Committee and the Agricultural and Forestal Districts Advisory Committee.



Central





Landscape Architects

Introduction

One of Community Visioning's greatest assets is the wide pool of landscape architects in the region who share their talents with the communities. Using evidence-based planning and design, the landscape architects and design interns translate the local expertise, community feedback, and bioregional analysis into concepts for thoughtful, implementable projects.

Each year a range of landscape architecture teams are selected from the regional pool of outstanding design professionals. Since its inception in 1996, the program has worked with nearly 80 designers representing more than 30 landscape architecture firms and organizations from Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and Illinois.

So many of the Midwest's leading firms have supported the Community Visioning over the years, but it is the individuals within those firms who have invigorated the program with their expertise and outstanding skill to provide vision to the community's goals.

Many of the names on the pages that follow are people who are now lead designers, project managers, and principals within their firms, but who were also once student interns within the studio at Iowa State University or cutting their teeth as design interns working on Community Visioning projects alongside the professionals. These individuals not only have provided their design expertise, but have also been some of the most vocal advocates for the program by introducing it to their offices and recruiting towns to participate.

Each design team is made up of landscape architect project managers and design interns in training. This is a great opportunity for the design leaders to mentor the next



Eric Doll listens to feedback on his design concepts during the Elkader design workshop.

generation of landscape architects. Many of the current designers managing the visioning projects were once design interns themselves, so they see the importance of the real world experiences and skills that they are able to provide to the students. The interns receive hands-on learning experiences in engagement as well as advancing technical design skills from experts in the field.

Participating in the Community Visioning program for the designers is a chance to make deeper connections with the residents of rural Iowa and provide lasting impacts. Outside of the visioning program, many of the communities would not have access to the high level of design services that these teams bring to the table. According to one of the Community Visioning landscape architects, "[The visioning program] has given us the opportunity to become better at serving small communities, an important client base for our practice."

"It feels like it's a nice way to give back. I learn as much from the interns as they learn from me. I wish I had an opportunity to be a part of a process like this when I went to school. Additionally, I like collaborating with Julia and the intelligent ISU staff I have had the pleasure of working with thus far."

—John Micka



Meg Flenker gives intern Ryan Anderson feedback on a design concept during the Lone Tree design workshop.

Douglas S. Adamson

Adamson & Associates (1998–2000)
SITE+ landscape architecture and planning
(2007)

Monte Applegate

Yaggy Colby Associates (2001–2004, 2006,
2007, 2009)

Eric Becker

Jeffery L. Bruce (2010–2014)

Andrea Blaha

Hall & Hall Engineers (2012)

Al Bohling

Shive-Hattery (1996–2001, 2004–2009, 2011)

Randy Brockway

Conservation Design Forum (2019–2020)

Casey Byers

Bolton & Menk (2014–2016, 2018)

Nate Byro

RDG Planning & Design (2020)

David Ciaccio

Ciaccio Dennell Group (1997)

John Crose

RDG Crose–Gardner–Shukert (1996)

Jen (DeWall) Cross

Genus Landscape Architects (2010)
RDG Planning & Design (2014, 2016–2017)

David L. Dahlquist

Shive-Hattery (2002–2003, 2005)

Chris Della Vedova

Brian Clark & Associates (1997–1999)

Eric Doll

Jeffery L. Bruce & Company (2013–2018,
2020)

Brett Douglas

Genus Landscape Architects (2006, 2010–
2013)

Tom Dunbar

Dunbar/Jones Partnership (1996–1997)

Curt Engelhardt

Snyder & Associates (2005–2006)

Meg Flenker

Flenker Land Architecture Consultants (1997–2010, 2015–2021)

Steve Ford

Steve Ford Landscape Architecture (2018–2019)

Kevin Froelich

Shive-Hattery (2005–2007)

Amber Gable

Bolton & Menk (2015–2016)

Shannon Gapp

Bolton & Menk (2018)

Jordan Garvey

Genus Landscape Architects (2017)

Seana Godbold

Beck Engineering (2007–2008)
Godbold Landscape Architecture (2009, 2011)

Harlan Groe

ISU Landscape Architecture Department (2013)

Robert Harvey

ISU Landscape Architecture Department (2013)

Loren Hoffman

Shive-Hattery (2001–2003)
Hoffman Design Consultants (2005–2010)
Hall & Hall Engineers (2011–2012)

Eric Holt

Genus Landscape Architects (2017)



Seana Godbold explains a design concept to residents during the Lake View public presentation.

"So many times, I think, that rural communities feel kind of depleted when we go in. They don't think they have what another community has. Our role as a landscape architect is to help them realize what makes them unique."

—Meg Flenker



An Osage steering committee member identifies an area of concern to Dylan Jones during a committee meeting.



With help from the Tiffin visioning committee, Jack Leaman notes significant areas on an aerial map of the community.

Paige Hubbard

Genus Landscape Architects (2017)

Chad Hunter

Community Design Lab ISU (2018–2020)

John Jacobson

Confluence (2010)

Nicki (Christensen) Jensen

Brian Clark & Associates (1999–2000)

Howard R. Green Company (2004–2005)

Dylan Jones

Genus Landscape Architects (2011–2013,
2019–2020)

Bolton & Menk (2015–2017)

Genevieve Keller

Land & Community Associates (2013)

J. Timothy Keller

Land & Community Associates & ISU (2013)

Mark Kuiper

Craig Ritland Landscape Architects (2007)

Michael P. Lanning

Shive-Hattery (2000–2003, 2005)

Jack E. Leaman

Jack E. Leaman Consultants (1997–2004,
2006–2007)

Michael LeClere

Martin Gardner Architecture (2018–2019)

Lybra Lindke

Conservation Design Forum (2010)

Anne Machian

RDG Planning & Design (2020)

John Micka

Veenstra & Kimm Inc (2008–2010)

Julie Mittelstadt

Shive-Hattery (2000–2001)

Jason Navota

Conservation Design Forum (2010)

Tom Neppl

Harrison/Neppl/Davis Inc (2005)

Bruce Niedermyer

RDG Planning & Design (2015–2016, 2020)

"My experience being a mentee under a mentor...helped me grow quite a bit. Now as a professional I see my opportunity to become a mentor for younger interns and staff and I love seeing growth in those young professional or interns and I like the growth that it provides me as well."

—Bruce Niedermyer



Jennifer Richmond listens to a resident's feedback during the West Okoboji design workshop.

Jim Patchett

Conservation Design Forum (1997, 2000)

Brian Pecka

Shive-Hattery (1997-1998)

Laura Peters

Adamson & Associates (1999-2000)
Genus Landscape Architects (2007-2008)

Paul R. Popelka

Engineering Plus (1996-2004)

Dan Pratt

Dan Pratt Design (1997, 2000)



Craig Ritland mentors intern Haley Adams during a Jesup visioning committee meeting.

Samantha (Abkes) Price

Craig Ritland Landscape Architects (2011-2012)
RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects (2013-2018, 2020)

Lyle Pudwill

Confluence (2010)

Hope Quayle

Conservation Design Forum (2001)

Anne Reinhart

Brian Clark & Associates (1997-1998)

Jennifer Richmand

Genus Landscape Architects (2006)

Craig D. Ritland

Craig Ritland Landscape Architects (1996–2010)
RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects
(2011–2018, 2020)

Justin Robershaw

Shive Hattery (2009)

Carl Rogers

Community Design Lab (2018–2020)

Nate Schlorholtz

Bolton & Menk (2018–2019)

Troy Seifert (1997)

Julie Shelton

Shive-Hattery (1999)

Josh Shields

Howard R. Green Company (2008–2009, 2011)
Bolton & Menk (2012, 2014, 2018)

Dolores D. Silkworth (2001–2003)

Bob Slipka

Genus Landscape Architects (2013)

Andrew G. Stahr

Shive-Hattery (2003)

Michael P. Stineman

Stineman Associates (1997–2000)
Shoemaker & Haaland (2005)

David Stokes

Jeffery L. Bruce & Company (2010–2018, 2021)

Nancy Surprenant

Howard R. Green Company (2001)

Grant Thompson

Genus Landscape Architects (2010, 2012)

Heidi Von Arb-Clingan

Howard R. Green Company (2008–2009)

Norman C. Ward

Shive-Hattery (2002–2003)

Weston Wunder

Landscape By Design (2005)

David Yocca

Conservation Design Forum (2010)

"We enjoy the process, the people, and the work very much. It helps keep us in touch with the attitudes and needs of people in rural Iowa communities who are so important to our practice and how it evolves."

—Craig Ritland



David Stokes, with intern Sam Thompson and colleague Eric Doll, engages a Hampton resident during the community's design workshop.





Interns

Introduction

Over the past 25 years, the Community Visioning internship has evolved from a handful of landscape architecture students working from the basement of the ISU College of Design to a much larger team of landscape architecture, planning, interior design, and architecture students in the ISU studio as well as interning at professional design firms. The visioning program has also benefited from the expertise of students specializing in graphic design, computer engineering, journalism, and English.

Visioning interns obtain real-world design and community engagement experiences. In addition, Since the introduction of a random-sample community survey in 2005 and community focus groups in 2009, student interns have learned how to conduct focus groups and interpret focus group and survey data. Interns also have the opportunity to advance their computer design skills in mapping, image editing, and data representation, including training in GIS, Adobe Creative Suite, and ArcGIS StoryMaps.

Most recently, the visioning interns have taken on tactical urbanism-based community engagement strategies that employ simple materials such as chalk paint, erosion control logs, milk crates, and vegetation to make temporary changes to the landscape to test design concepts and allow people to experience design projects before they are implemented. This summer, design interns were responsible for the research, planning, design, examination, construction, and implementation of the work, as well as participation in the community engagement process.

A significant impact of the visioning internship program is the number of former interns who advocate for the visioning program within their firms as practitioners and even to their hometowns as residents. Finally, through the Community Visioning internship, these former interns go on to mentor the next generation of landscape architects.



2004 Intern Training in Linn County.



Erik Rinkleff & Chad Oppenhuizen work on image edits during the design charrette in Rudd.

1997-98

- Tami Billerbeck
- Seh-Young Choi
- Phil Choo
- Andriana Ekahastuti
- Kyle Fiddelke
- Michael Lanning
- Chad Oppenhuizen
- Kelly Quinn
- Erik Rinkleff
- Pat Szurpicki
- Hope VanderWerff

1998-99

- Chris Beorkrem
- Tami Billerbeck
- Brett Blackwelder
- Joy Chen
- Phil Choo
- Seh-Young Choi
- Andriana Ekahastuti
- Jeanie Hau
- Kelly Quinn
- Jill Schwartz
- Hope VanderWerff
- Xiaomu Yang

1999-00

- Rama Atluri
- Kyle Beidler
- Peter Butler
- Phil Choo
- Ruth Fox
- Brad Haigh
- Sam Miller
- Joshua Shields
- Elliot Stendel
- David Wang
- Weston Wunder

2000-01

- Kyle Beidler
- Phil Choo
- Erika Dilley
- Greg Dow
- Paul Fyle
- Pete Gansen
- Holly Glick
- Todd Jacobs
- Heather Kastern
- Sam Miller
- Adam Pfister
- Joshua Shields
- Troy Vaughn
- Norm Ward

- Worked in a private-sector firm
- Worked in the Community Visioning Program office



Erika Dilley presents design concepts in Sheldon.

2001-02

- Nicole Allen
- Kyle Boot
- Sonya Chen
- Phil Choo
- Holly Glick
- Zach Heitzman
- Hans Klein
- Nicholas Magilton
- Carrie Mardorf
- Sam Miller
- Adam Pfister
- T.J. Purdy
- Amanda Sanders
- Josh Simpson

2002-03

- Rebecca Froeter
- Kimberly Graper
- Heather Kastern
- Jason Kempker
- Patience Lueth
- Sam Miller
- Luke Parris
- Colleen Rafferty
- Brian Ryckman
- Theodore Willger
- Joel Wood

2003-04

- Haley Adams
- Joe Aronson
- Yijun Deng
- Nate Evans
- Meredith Harr
- Clare Kerofsky
- Patience Lueth
- Liz Oliveira
- Phuong Nguyen
- Luke Parris
- Jacquelyn Peck
- Colleen Rafferty
- Christine Sawyer
- Joshua Shields

2004-05

- Haley Adams
- Nana Appiah
- Max Claassen
- Denise Clark
- Brandon Coffman
- Jennifer Cross
- Susan DeBlieck
- Nate Evans
- Marcy Lloyd
- Katherine Lough
- Patience Lueth
- Christine Sawyer
- Heidi Von Arb
- Angela Young
- Rachel Weber



Haley Adams and Heidi Von Arb receive public input at the Washington design workshop



Patience Lueth sketches a design while a resident looks on during the Belmond design workshop.

"The Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program internship allowed me to develop the skills I learned in school and apply them to our projects. The internship also unveiled an interest I had, unknowingly, in community design. After realizing this interest, I decided to continue my education and pursue a master's in planning with an emphasis in community design and development."

— Colleen Rafferty

2005-06

- Mary Bumgardner
- Michael Callahan
- Mike Cedar
- Ryan Chapman
- Aakriti Chaudhari
- Erin Conway
- Chris Gallant
- Jason Grimm
- Tara Henson
- Sara Huth
- Christine Sawyer
- Michael van Jaarsveld
- Lan Wei

2006-07

- Kelsey Allen
- Jennifer DeWall
- Ted Doscher
- Wei Feng
- Troy Gillispie
- Lisa Jarnell
- Dylan Jones
- Andrew Kraemer
- Jason Perrault
- Arpita Ray
- Angela Roberson

"As an intern with the Community Visioning Program, I developed skills that not only enhanced my academic life but also shaped my interests and passion for community involvement throughout the design process."

– Holly Glick



Jennifer DeWall helps a child take an online survey in Robins.

2007-08

- Martyn Albert
- Emily Brodersen
- Erin Carpenter
- Jared Gebauer
- Lisa Jarnell
- Dylan Jones
- John Kavanaugh II
- Laura Lutz
- Bruce Niedermeyer
- Rachel Remetch
- Justin Robertshaw
- John Simmons

2008-09

- Samantha Abkes
- Chris Bahls
- Andrea Blaha
- Jennifer DeWall
- Eric Doll
- Emily Hoffman
- Greg Leichty
- Laura Lutz
- Luke Ness
- Rachel Remetch
- Angela Roberson
- Damon Sanchez
- Jeff Steen
- Lily-Love Toppar
- Shengyi Yue

2009-10

- Martyn Albert
- Barry Bode
- Eric Doll
- Andrew Kraemer
- Allie Loecke
- Brandon Losey
- Laura Lutz
- Bruce Neidermyer
- Annie Remmerde
- Chris Riggert
- John Simmons
- Lily-Love Toppar
- Nate Weitl

2010-11

- YoungJae Ahn
- Ryan Anderson
- Michael Buh
- Samuel Carlson
- Devon Clark
- Eric Doll
- Kelly Fuglsang
- Nick Gulick
- Robin Hamadani
- Sifei Liu
- Laura Lutz
- Alex Priest
- Danny Pritchard
- Chris Riggert
- Nate Schlorholtz
- Steven Seefeld
- Lily-Love Toppar



Lily-Love Toppar explains informed consent to St. Olaf youth during a focus group workshop.

"Being an intern with the community visioning program...was my first real landscape architecture internship experience. It got me into an office and got my foot in the door. Some of the things that I experienced as an intern...gave me the skills that I needed to succeed professionally."

— Dylan Jones

2011-12

- Eric Doll
- Annie Glawe
- Nick Gulick
- Adam Hageman
- Shu Liu
- Jonathan Nelsen
- Danny Pritchard
- Nate Schlorholtz
- Paola Sepulveda

2012-13

- Chrissy Amaya
- Colby Fangman
- Annie Glawe
- Rachel Johnson
- Sam Kirchner
- Chelsea McCaw
- Chris Riggert
- Jake Wilson



Chris Riggert helps Monroe youth read an aerial map during special places mapping.



Front to back: Katherine Gould, Miao Fangzhou, & Kayla Volkmer upload photo data during a focus group workshop.

2013-14

- Neal Abbott
- Chrissy Amaya
- Nicholas Decker
- Miao Fangzhou
- Amber Gable
- Katherine Gould
- Anne Hundley
- Shannon Kazynski
- David O'Brien
- Spencer Sneller
- Kayla Volkmer
- Matthew White
- Shiyue Zhang

2014-15

- Jessica Adiwijaya
- Rachel Anderson
- Sara Davids
- Colby Fangman
- Miao Fangzhou
- Richard Garcia
- Katherine Gould
- Evan Kay
- Kevin Kinney
- Amy Larrance
- Anh Le
- Nuo Man
- Emily Scott
- Zihao Wang
- Lanxi Zhang

2015-16

- Erika Birnbaum
- Eric Cook
- Sarah Davids
- Madison Dierks
- Miao Fangzhou
- Ashleigh Gildon
- Katherine Gould
- Henry Herman
- Amanda Holtman
- Claire Kinley
- Anh Le
- Emma Lorenz
- Nuo Man
- Hannah Schmitz
- Jake Spitz
- Sam Thompson



Claire Kinley maps focus group data.

2016-17

- Nate Byro
- Zhi Chen
- Casey Cox
- Riley Dunn
- Ricky Garcia
- Henry Herman
- Dominick Florer
- Alysse Kirkman
- Giannis Koutsou
- Fan-Kai Lin
- Emma Lorenz
- Nuo Man
- Zoey Mauck
- Peter Reyland
- Hannah Schmitz
- Sam Thompson
- Carol Joella Ustine

2017-18

- Mahsa Adib
- Jesse Bell
- Dominick Florer
- Emma Georgeff
- Hatvany Conception-Gomez
- Ngoc Ho
- Mengtian Huang
- Jeremy Johnson
- Tim Kerkhove
- Clare Kiboko
- Emma Lorenz
- Rosie Manzo
- Jerry Philbin
- Saina Sayanjoo
- Abigail Schafer
- Carole Joella Ustine
- Wan Wei
- Shuang Wu

2018-19

- Mahsa Adib
- Peiming Chen
- Alisa Courey
- Casey Cox
- Riley Dunn
- Alysse Kirkman
- Giannis Koutsou
- Fan Lan
- Zoey Mauck
- Paola Monllor Torres
- Zach Rupprecht
- Parmiss Sazgar
- Emily Serchen
- Chad Schultz
- Laura Schwartz
- Jonathan Sherwood
- Jue Jue (J.J.) Wai Hin Thaw
- Hooyue (Karma) Yang
- Wei Zhang



Jeremy Johnson sketches during the Decorah design workshop.



Henry Herman helps Morning Sun committee members navigate their visioning webpage at the celebration.

2019-20

- Austin Alexander
- Joe Anderson
- Lexi Blank
- Alisa Courey
- Minnie Davis
- Emma Georgeff
- Dani Hodgson
- Clare Kiboko
- Giannis Koutsou
- Sandeep Kumar
- Aaron Lewis
- Britney Markhardt
- Zoey Mauck
- Paola Monllor Torres
- Zach Rupprecht
- Mallory Sage
- Parmiss Sazgar
- Abigail Schafer
- Kristian Schofield
- Emily Serchen
- Carissa Shoemaker
- Ben Stewart
- Hooyue (Karma) Yang

2020-21

- Lexi Blank
- Alisa Courey
- Hossein Entezari
- T.J. Hillberry
- Paul Hsu
- Britney Markhardt
- Giannis Koutsou
- Ethan Morrow
- Paola Monllor Torres
- Lin Pizzo
- Zach Rupprecht
- Mallory Sage
- Parmiss Sazgar
- Joslyn Schafer
- Suzanne Sharp
- Jessica Svoboda
- Izabel Wilde



From left to right: Parmiss Sazgar, Molly Walkner (Trees Forever), T.J. Hillberry, Paola Monllor Torres, and Ethan Morrow build an outdoor pavilion using milk crates in the riverfront park in Princeton to attract participants to the design workshop.





Outstanding Leaders

Introduction

The following pages highlight 25 individuals who have made their mark on the Community Visioning Program throughout its existence. These stories represent only a small fraction of the leadership that got the program off the ground, the passionate interns who have gone on to become project leaders and visioning advocates, and the steering committee members who were outspoken champions for their towns.

Community Visioning's strength is the people who get involved. There are thousands of individuals who have supported Community Visioning in their own special way and we are grateful to all of you! To all of the community residents, steering committee members, designers, interns, administrators, engineers, city officials, educators, researchers, consultants...Thank you! The saying, "It takes a village," is no exaggeration when it comes to the Community Visioning process. Your creativity, expertise and thoughtfulness are responsible for the success of the program and the reason it exists and remains relevant after 25 years.





Al Bohling

Landscape Architect
Shive-Hattery

Al Bohling played an integral role in the ongoing success of the Community Visioning Program from the early days of the program until his retirement in 2016 and beyond. Al worked in 19 communities up and down the "East Coast" of Iowa from Montrose to Guttenberg and throughout eastern Iowa. As the landscape architect and community development team lead at Shive-Hattery Architecture and Engineering, he fostered interest in the program among his colleagues, who also participated in the program, creating designs for 13 more communities. Al also took time to mentor 16 visioning interns, some of whom he would later hire upon graduation.

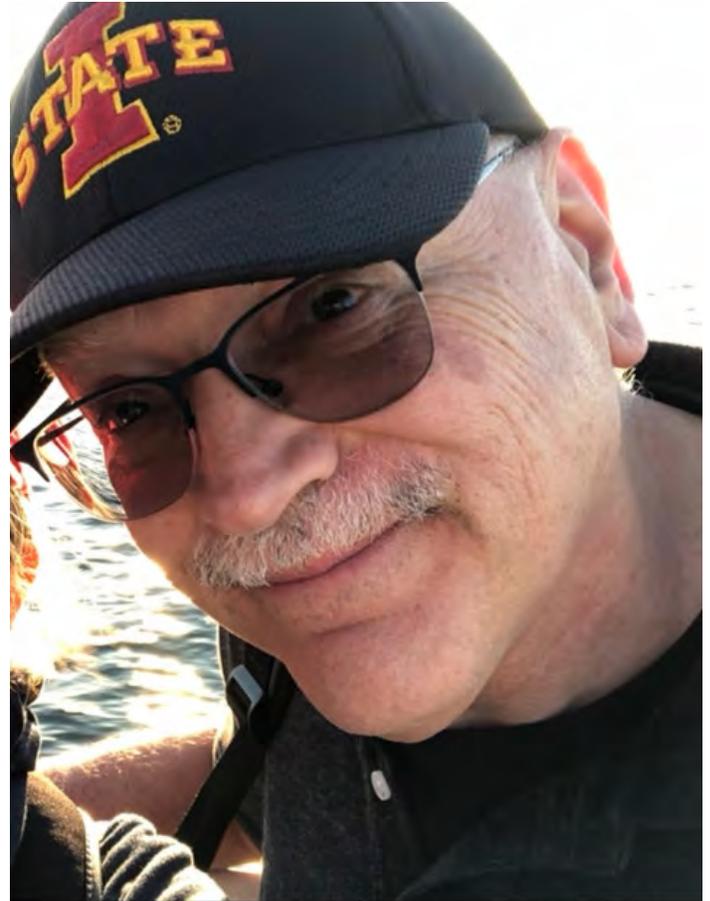
Al's service to communities has continued outside his "official" capacity. Al has been a member of the Louisa County Conservation Board and served as the Iowa commissioner of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, leading the effort in Iowa to have the Great River Road designated as a National Scenic Byway. He helped establish the Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation, which provides funds for the protection and enhancement of the natural resources in the area of the confluences of the Cedar, Iowa and Mississippi Rivers in eastern Iowa.

Tim Borich

Associate Professor Iowa State University

Tim Borich became involved with the Community Visioning Program prior to the creation of Iowa's Living Roadways, when the program was an Extension pilot project developed by then Extension landscape architect Julia Badenhop. With decades of community outreach experience at Iowa State University, his background in leadership development and processes for organizing communities was invaluable to getting the program off the ground.

Even after the program was well established, Tim continued to be involved. He advised program staff on developing a transportation survey and later, transportation focus groups to address the needs and desires of different user types, which enhanced the community assessment process with more public input. As the program director of Community and Economic Development Extension, Tim connected Community Visioning with Extension resources and the expertise of his community development specialists, who help facilitate focus groups and recruit potential community applicants. Tim retired a program director in 2015 but continues to teach part time for the ISU Department of Community and Regional Planning.



"The people make those kinds of partnerships last. 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."



Rebecca Castle

Project Coordinator, Golden Hills RC&D

Rebecca joined Golden Hills RC&D in 2017, working primarily on scenic byways. A southwest Iowa native, she graduated from Farragut High School and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Iowa. Since returning "home" to Shenandoah in 2007 she has been heavily involved with the Wabash Trace Nature Trail and the community of Imogene, as well as other business and nonprofit endeavors in the area. Rebecca enjoys discovering all the treasures that rural Iowa has to offer with her son, Solon, and helping out on the family farm with her fiancé Jerry and sons Owen and Ethan.

In her short time at Golden Hills, Rebecca has been a vocal advocate for Community Visioning, encouraging communities to apply to the program and providing assistance with their applications. To date, she has worked with Peterson, Malvern, Shenandoah, and most recently, Farragut, all of which were successful applicants. Her efforts have helped to boost the program's efforts in southwest Iowa.

Phil Choo

Department Head & Professor of Graphic Design Penn State University

Phil Choo joined ISU Extension Landscape Architecture as a graduate assistant in 1996 and immediately became an integral part of ISU's Community Visioning team. His elegant graphic design graced several of the program's publications, ranging from celebration invitations and programs to evaluation research reports. In addition, he served as a mentor to the undergraduate interns, helping them improve their digital graphics and photography skills. Finally, he warmly welcomed a newly minted project manager in 2000 and gave her a new appreciation for the importance of good graphic design.

Phil graduated with a master's in fine arts (MFA) from ISU in 2002. Since then, he has taught at University of Minnesota; Oklahoma State University, where he was the head of the M.F.A. program in graphic design in the Department of Art, Graphic Design and Art History; and Penn State, where he is the head of the Graphic Design program.

Phil has earned top honors in the University and College Designers Association (UCDA) Design Competition; Graphis; International Visual Identity Awards; American Advertising Awards (formerly Addy Award); the annual Graphex Design Awards from the Art Director's Club in Tulsa; the Art Design Institute (ADI) Award Exhibition at the China Academy of Art; and the National Educators' Design Exhibition (DENE), among others.



"My time with ISU Landscape Architecture Extension was one of the most memorable times in my 23 years as an international person, coming from Seoul, Korea, alone. The experience and support I gained...still influence my career and live in my DNA. I practice them in my work every day: learn how to work with others and offer a sense of belonging and care to my colleagues."



Jennifer Cowsert

City Administrator Elkader, Iowa

Jennifer Cowsert moved to Elkader in 2004 when she accepted the position of city administrator/clerk, a good job opportunity in a location that brought her closer to her family. Just four years later, Elkader was devastated by the record-breaking flooding of the Turkey River. Jennifer served as the local government contact when Elkader first participated in Community Visioning in 2009 and was deeply involved in the post-flood development process, which included establishing Founders' Park and the river walk in the flood buyout area.

In 2020, when Elkader applied again for Community Visioning, she co-wrote the application with the director of the Turkey River Recreation Corridor and shepherded the community through the process as the steering committee chair. That same year, Jennifer and former mayor Bob Garms agreed to share the story of the 2008 flood in front of a camera as part of the 2020 Iowa's Living Roadways Celebration, "Creating the Silver Lining: Post-disaster Recovery," to give other communities facing natural disasters a sense of hope.

"After we knew there would be a residential buyout, people didn't know what we going to do with this area. There were different ideas, but the Community Visioning process was able to take all the ideas that people generated and kind of boil it down to a master plan."

Eric Doll

Park Planner City of Des Moines

Eric Doll began his career with Community Visioning as an intern in 2008, working four program years as a student and honing his design skills at three different landscape architecture firms that collaborated with eight communities. After earning his BLA in 2012, he took a job with Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company, one of the firms where he interned. With Eric on board, JBC was able to open an office in Des Moines, and as a landscape architect Eric provided design services to 14 visioning communities.

Eric's love of art and plants and his unbounding energy have brought creativity and passion to the Community Visioning Program. He has been an enthusiastic advocate for the program, even helping to recruit communities to apply. Eric left JBC in 2021 to become park planner for the City of Des Moines, but his impact on Iowa's rural communities, as well as the many interns he mentored, will last for years to come.



"There's so much, especially for a student in landscape architecture, to learn from [Community Visioning] because you work in a firm setting. It's great for networking... You...start understanding how things can come together. When people collaborate there's just so much power behind it...Also, working with community members is a life changing experience."



Meg Flenker

Landscape Architect & Principal Flenker Land Architecture Consultants

Meg became involved with Community Visioning in 1997, shortly after establishing her own firm, Flenker Land Architecture Consultants, just south of the Quad Cities. Since then, she has participated in the program nearly every year and worked with 28 communities, many of which called on her to help them implement their landscape projects and realize their dreams. Meg has been an excellent mentor to up-and-coming landscape architects because she takes the time to work one on one with her interns. Students who have worked for Meg value her knowledge and experience, as well as her willingness to learn from them.

The path of Meg's career as a landscape architect was shaped by her background and experiences growing up on a farm, which she believes nurtured her interest in environmental stewardship. Visioning communities not only benefit from Meg's expertise in landscape architecture, but also from her knowledge of soil erosion and stormwater issues. In addition to being a registered landscape architect, Meg is a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) and was the first Certified Professional in Stormwater Quality (CPSWQ) in the state of Iowa.

"Working with the government agencies and public institutions— Iowa State, the Iowa DOT—a nonprofit, and community volunteers is just really a such a pluralistic process. What [Community Visioning] does for the communities is to me something that isn't available anywhere else."

Seana Godbold

Chief Landscape Architect Iowa Department of Transportation

Seana Godbold first encountered Community Visioning in 2001 while working for landscape architect Paul Popelka at Engineering Plus, assisting with the communities of Le Grand, Sheldon, and Belmond. While employed at Snyder & Associates, she encouraged her colleagues to become involved with the program in 2005 and 2006 but did not have the opportunity to participate herself. As a landscape architect in Storm Lake at Beck Engineering and then as principal of her own business, Seana provided concept plans to four visioning communities in northwest Iowa and mentored four interns.

Having taken such a deep interest in conservation and low impact development, Seana also worked with the Emmet County Soil and Water Conservation District and eventually served as the Tuttle Lake Watershed coordinator until the completion of her watershed project in 2013. Upon relocating to central Iowa, Seana continued her career with the Iowa Department of Transportation in the Consultant Coordination, Photogrammetry, and Preliminary Design Sections. In 2017, she was promoted to serve as the chief landscape architect in the Design Bureau where she manages the Roadside Development Section and continues to advocate for Community Visioning and advise project staff.





Steve Holland

Former Roadside
Coordinator, Iowa
Living Roadway Trust
Fund
Iowa Department of
Transportation

Thanks to Steve Holland, director of the Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF) at the Iowa Department of Transportation, travelers on Iowa's highways have something more to look at than mown grass. They can also worry less about snow drifting across the road during the winter months. Steve worked with LRTF from 1988, when the Iowa Legislature created it, until his retirement in 2012. The program provides funding for integrated roadside vegetation management activities, including preservation, establishment, and maintenance of native vegetation along Iowa's roadsides.

Steve became directly involved with the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning and Projects programs through working with Trees Forever. He valued the programs because they gave small communities the opportunity to learn the value of native vegetation and how to use it to make their towns better. Throughout his career, Steve looked out for the "little guy" or underdog community. He felt strongly about helping these communities, not because they submitted a beautiful application, but because they expressed a need and a desire for assistance.

"Community Visioning allowed us to get better designs for working with native plants and better opportunities to reach small towns. Working with Community Visioning was really rewarding because we saw our work get directly applied to communities."

Roger Hunt

Landscape Architect



Roger Hunt was a landscape architect and field coordinator at Trees Forever from 1991 to 2011. Trees Forever suited Roger because he was able to stay involved with landscape architecture and had the opportunity to work with small rural communities and rural landscapes. He appreciates the opportunities that Trees Forever gave him to grow both personally and professionally. It was through Trees Forever that Roger became involved with the Community Visioning Program. He helped get the Community Visioning Program started in 1996 and over the years facilitated the visioning process for 20 communities in southeast Iowa. The appeal of the visioning program for Roger was twofold. It allowed him to promote the profession of landscape architecture while helping rural communities. Throughout his career at Trees Forever, Roger was also a farmer and still works the family farm, Suntree Farm, with his sons. The farm has been in his family since 1842 and his farming background instilled in him a love of the outdoors. Roger has raised Black Angus cattle and created on-farm conservation areas. His farm is living proof that a healthy environment and agriculture can coexist.

"It's always been important to me to help these little towns out. That's why I keep coming back to visioning, because I see how much they appreciate [the program]."



Mark Kerper

Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Location and Environment

Mark Kerper grew up in eastern Iowa, where he attended Loras College and University of Wisconsin–Plattville before coming to Iowa State University to study engineering. He began his career at the Iowa Department of Transportation as a civil engineer in 1977. Mark became the Iowa DOT Community Visioning program officer in the early 2000s, when he was assistant director of the Office of Location and Environment. In addition to offering his support and insights to Community Visioning staff, Mark promoted environmental stewardship within the context of transportation project delivery by balancing the needs of the public with the environment and ensuring environmental regulatory compliance. In this role he worked with Native American tribes and nations who have a historic or ancestral connection to the state of Iowa to ensure that historic properties were not impacted by Iowa DOT and FHWA projects. In 2010, Mark tragically died in an automobile accident in Dubuque County, but his legacy with the program lives on.

Ron Lenth

County Extension
Coordinator
Bremer County Extension
and Outreach



Ron Lenth, the director of ISU Extension and Outreach in Bremer County, has been a community advocate in northeast Iowa for many years. He serves on the Tree Board Committee for Waverly, Oelwein, and Tripoli, which helps plant 300-500 trees annually for those communities. He is also the assistant commissioner for the Bremer County Soil and Water Conservation District, serving as its representative for four watersheds - the Upper Cedar, Upper Wapsipinicon and Shell Rock Rivers, and the Upper Crane Creek Watershed. In addition, Ron coordinates the Waverly Community Sharing Garden and Orchard, a two-block plot on the floodplain ruined by 2008 Cedar River Flood. In 2021, this group donated more than 11,000 pounds of fresh produce to the Northeast Iowa Food Bank and area churches for food-insecure families.

In 2012, Ron served on the Tripoli visioning committee and continues to work closely with the city on grant writing and project implementation. In 2019, he supported the application of Sumner to Community Visioning, agreeing to help the community through the process.

"Community Visioning is a way for our smaller communities to get ideas how to make communities more successful. The first major need we discovered was a safe way to have people walk along the highways and out to the marsh."



Chris Luhring

City Administrator Parkersburg, IA

Chris Luhring began his service in Parkersburg by joining the ambulance service as a volunteer EMT-B in 1998. After graduating from University of Northern Iowa, he started his law enforcement career with the police department in 2001 and became chief of police in 2004. Chris helped lead Parkersburg on the road to recovery after an EF5 tornado struck on May 25, 2008. When Parkersburg participated in the 2009 Community Visioning Program, he was the city contact and was heavily involved in the implementation of the Highway 14/57 project. Chris was promoted into an administrative position with the City of Parkersburg in November 2009 and he continues to assist with EMS and law enforcement duties to this day. As city administrator/city clerk, Chris has been committed to continue the legacy of those that came before him whose goals were to make Parkersburg the greatest small town that it can be. He has presented to audiences throughout the United States about the importance of preparation and how other communities can successfully recover from both natural and man-made disasters of their own.

"The visioning process really came in and said 'We care about you, we are passionate...not just about helping you create a vision but passionate about getting that vision done and accomplishing those goals.'"



Mark Masteller

Former Chief Landscape Architect Iowa Department of Transportation

Mark grew up on his parents' farm in Atlantic, Iowa. He was interested in studying landscape architecture because it offered opportunities to use his technical drawing skills while working outdoors. He graduated from Iowa State University with a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture in 1978. Shortly thereafter, he took a job at the Iowa DOT in Ames, and worked in mapping and graphics, preliminary design, and final design before becoming chief landscape architect in 1989. Mark was instrumental in facilitating the partnership that became Iowa's Living Roadways. He had the insight to recognize an opportunity to combine the design talent and community development approach of ISU with the grant distribution and physical community project approach of Trees Forever.

Mark is a huge proponent of the Community Visioning internship program because he understands the value of such an experience to up-and-coming landscape architects. His advocacy was recognized with the establishment of the Masteller Intern Award, given to exceptional landscape architecture students who work for the program. In 2004, Mark was awarded the Design Achievement Award by the ISU College of Design for the contributions he has made throughout his career to Iowa. This annual award recognizes outstanding mid-career creative and professional achievements of COD alumni. Mark retired from the Iowa DOT in 2015.



Dawn Meyer

City Clerk
Manning, Iowa

Dawn Meyer started working for the City of Manning in 2007 as deputy city clerk for approximately six months, was city clerk for three years, and has been city clerk/administrator since 2011. She enjoys the challenges that come with being a public servant. Her favorite aspects of the job include grant writing, public interaction, and community development, making her a perfect fit for Community Visioning.

Dawn participated in the 2012 and 2016 visioning processes for Manning as well as Trails Visioning and has been a driving force behind project implementation. The community has completed an incredible number of projects in a short period of time, including a community trail system, a downtown green space, native roadside plantings, community entrance and way-finding signage, and Trestle Park.

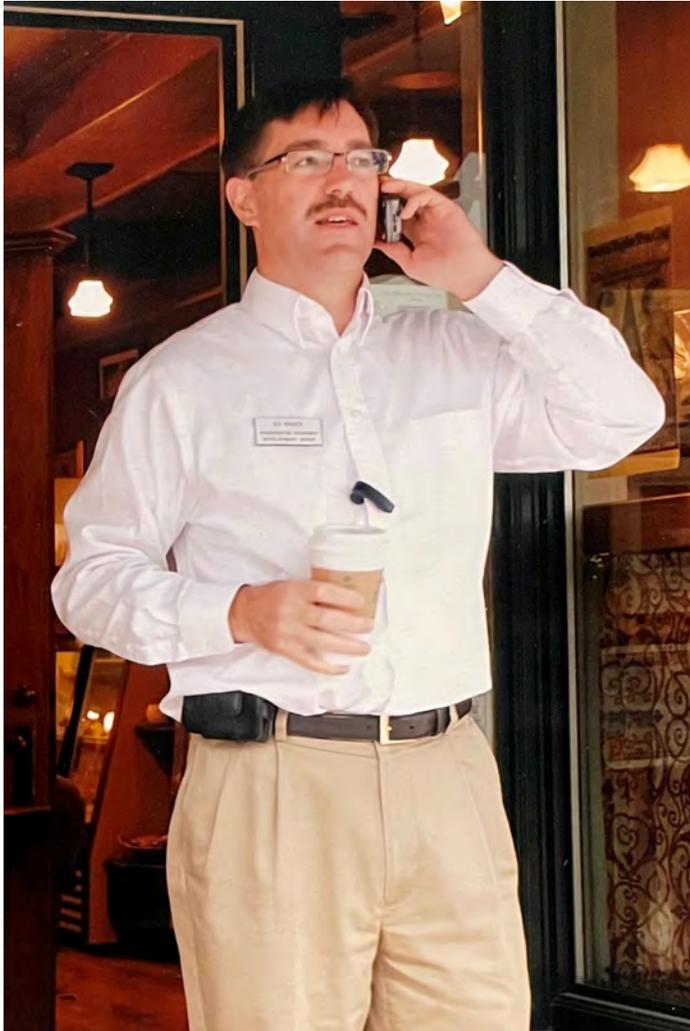
"All of our communities are very appreciative of what the Community Visioning program has given us!"



Sandra Oberbroeckling

Community Visioning Project Manager Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

Sandra Oberbroeckling is the project manager for the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program, a position she has held since 2000. She is also the communications specialist for Community and Economic Development (CED) Extension, managing the unit's website, editing its bimonthly newsletter, and producing other marketing and educational materials; her connection to the unit has facilitated a positive working relationship between Community Visioning and CED. Sandra is a master of logistics, communication, and writing, creating most of the publications and media associated with the program. She also has a passion for research, especially planning research that reveals the nuances of people and place. Without her commitment and ability to communicate across disciplines and agencies, the program would not be where it is today.



Ed Raber

Project Coordinator Dubuque County

Ed Raber is a graduate of the University of Iowa Urban and Regional Planning master's program and has more than 30 years of experience in community and economic development in eastern Iowa. In the early 1990s at the East Central Intergovernmental Association, he assisted more than a dozen small communities to develop strategic plans, worked as a transportation planner for the Dubuque MPO, and helped to form the multi-county Regional Planning Affiliation.

As the executive director for the nonprofit Washington Economic Development Group for more than 20 years, Ed was a tireless advocate for the visioning program, supporting the applications of Washington, Brighton, Wellman, Riverside, Keota, and Kalona. He also helped community groups access the resources to implement many of their visioning projects. Ed is currently a project coordinator for Dubuque County, where he continues to encourage communities to apply for Community Visioning.

"The eye opener through Community Visioning was that people realized that they were the fire...we could work collaboratively; we could take those ideas and transform them into actual projects."

Patty Reisinger

Field Coordinator
Trees Forever



"I think the partnership is kind of a synergistic effort and that it much better, much richer, a much greater help to our small towns in Iowa because of the partnerships."

Trained as a horticulturist, Patty Reisinger began her career as an Iowa State University Extension specialist in horticulture. She joined Trees Forever in the early 1990s, where she led tree planting programs and helped to launch the Community Visioning Program in her role as a field coordinator. Her passion for teaching, organizing, and facilitation resulted in success for the many communities she has served since that time. Patty is known for her appreciation for rural towns, her commitment to 'getting it right,' and her persistence in making sure community members know all they can, can make decisions in a timely manner, and find just the right time and place to celebrate the proposed designs. She is a legend among practicing landscape architects and interns, who appreciate her knowledgeable and sure facilitation of the planning process and insights into what works in rural towns. Patty is retiring in November 2021.



Brad Riphagen

Field Coordinator
Trees Forever

A restoration ecologist by training, Brad Riphagen joined Trees Forever in the early 1990s, helping communities establish more diverse, vibrant tree canopies and roadsides through Trees Forever's educational outreach and project building programs. A field coordinator since the inception of the program, Brad enjoys the process of getting to know his client communities, local volunteers and kids who tag along and get dragged into the action. His kindness, insight, and sense of humor help communities enjoy the process, as they explore local needs, desires and opportunities for making trails, better urban forests, and roadside enhancements. He maintains communication with his client communities, assisting with plant selection and sourcing, volunteer organization, and often arrives to help out on planting days.

"The best aspect of working with the Community Visioning Program is actually getting to know the volunteers in the community a whole lot better. We get to know them over the course of half a year to a year and learning about their communities through their eyes."

Craig Ritland

Principal & Founder
RITLAND+
KUIPER Landscape
Architects



"Every intern we've had, I've worked with personally and I've really enjoyed that. I love the value system that they bring - things that oftentimes we don't think about or haven't thought about for quite a while. I think that enriches the atmosphere and the project outcomes."

Craig Ritland is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and a leader in Iowa's landscape architecture community. His projects range in scale from regional greenways to pocket parks, from urban infrastructure to interpretive exhibits and conservation parks. His sensitivity to rural life, countryside pursuits and the beauty of the natural world infuses his design for Iowa's communities, which leads to incredibly successful follow through on building projects at a local level. Craig is also an accomplished artist, with successful submissions to the Duck Stamp and Trout Stamp competitions sponsored by the Iowa DNR. He has been involved with Community Visioning since 1996, providing design services to an astounding 43 communities, many of which have gone on to build projects ranging from native prairies and roadside vegetation to complete streetscapes and multi-use trails. Craig is also a kind and dedicated mentor to the young landscape architects who intern in his office.



Chris Seeger

Professor & Extension Landscape Architect Iowa State University

Christopher J. Seeger is a landscape architect with a passion for community engagement and spatial data, and an inventor who envisions and creates software and workshop processes to help people document, understand, and communicate about their environment. He has been deeply involved in creating visual quality surveys, transportation surveys, and other participatory geographic information systems to assist communities and designers find out how the transportation system is working. In collaboration with Julia Badenhope and others, Chris has transformed the capability of Landscape Architecture Extension to document and solicit feedback about the landscape. He has received national recognition for his work through the Transportation Research Board Committee on Planning for Small Communities.

Chris is also the mastermind behind the ISU Extension and Outreach Indicators Program, an online resource that provides data and information for decision makers at the local, regional, and state levels; and is a key investigator in the Data Science for the Public Good (DSPG) Young Scholars program, an immersive program that engages students from across Iowa to work together on projects that address local and state government challenges around critical social issues relevant in the world today.

"I think our social landscapes today are very complex. As landscape architects, we are trained to take information, synthesize what we find, and generate designs that meet clients' needs. But we really have to listen to the people, and technology has given us additional ways to listen to end users—before, during, and after the design process."

Josh Shields

Senior Project
Landscape Architect
Bolton & Menk, Inc.



An integral part of the Community Visioning Program is making connections—physical connections through transportation systems, connections between the community and the landscape, or connections among people. No one better illustrates the power of these connections than landscape architect Josh Shields. Josh grew up in southern Iowa, earned a degree in landscape architecture from ISU, and now is a senior project landscape architect for Bolton & Menk.

"I love working with communities to strategize ways to enhance their quality of life. I especially enjoy seeing these visions become reality, even if it doesn't always look like the master plan. Their passion and success is what makes it all worthwhile."

Josh first connected with the Community Visioning Program as a student intern in 1999–2000. During his first year as an intern, he worked in the communities of Grundy Center, Strawberry Point and Vinton. In addition, he assisted other interns in Brooklyn and Williamsburg. In 2001, he worked in the northwest Iowa community of Sheldon, as well as on a pilot project along the U.S. 71 corridor in Audubon County. As a landscape architect, he has maintained his relationship with Community Visioning and has been a mentor to several visioning interns, as well as former interns later employed by Howard R. Green Company, where he worked from 2003 to 2011, and Bolton & Menk. He has led design teams for 17 communities and mentored 13 interns.



Carole Teator

Conservation Professional Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

Carole Teator was Tree Forever's program director from 1997 to 2006 and again from 2010 to 2017, managing the Community Visioning Program for the organization. During her tenure at Trees Forever, she served as both a leader for the field coordinators and as a facilitator for 13 communities. She also facilitated the US 151 corridor project in Jones and Dubuque Counties in 2001. Carole has master's degrees in both English and community a regional planning from Iowa State University, and her skills in communication and planning served the program well during her tenure at Trees Forever.

Carole is a transplant from the East Coast who found home in Iowa in the late 1980s when she moved here for graduate school at Iowa State University. She lived in Ames, Dubuque, Marion and Garber before ultimately finding her way to the wooded neighborhood she calls home in Cedar Rapids. Carole enjoys doing anything that gets her outdoors, volunteering in her community, and learning about history and her family's genealogy.



Margo Underwood

Pocahontas County Hometown Pride Coach

Margot is president of Underwood Consulting, a business that provides resource management and public relations services to communities, businesses and non-profits. She has over 20 years of experience working with communities to help them develop solid waste plans. A resident of Clear Lake, Margo chairs the Iowa Natural Resource Commission and is the Keep Iowa Beautiful Hometown Pride Community Coach for communities in Pocahontas County.

Margo Underwood is president of Underwood Consulting, a business that provides resource management and public relations services to communities, businesses and non-profit organizations. Margo has 20 years of experience

in both the public and private sectors working with communities to help them develop solid waste plans in Iowa and Minnesota. Margo serves as chair of the Iowa Natural Resource Commission and is a past president and current board member of Trees Forever. Margo grew up on an Iowa Century Farm in Scott County, received her B.S. and M.S. Degrees from ISU, and serves as the KIB Hometown Pride Community Coach in nine communities in Pocahontas County.



Marie Whiteing

City of Mapleton
President, Rebuild
and Recover

Marie Whiteing has been an agriculture technology entrepreneur, a beltway influencer, and a leading voice in Iowa's rural development programs. Since retiring, she has shared her talents and insights through public service within her community, through active service in her church, and as a member of many volunteer organizations. But in 2011 when a tornado struck Mapleton, Iowa, she used all her talents and influence to spearhead Mapleton's long-term disaster recovery effort. She assembled and mobilized an ecumenical group of long-time residents from all walks of life who had been affected by the disaster. Her vision of service to help heal both the people in the community and infrastructure that created more equity among them has facilitated ongoing project development, attainment of grants and local contributions, and long-term investment in housing. She has used the products of Community Visioning to leverage this progress and more.

"I think working with Community Visioning created a better sense of community. We lose that once in a while, and then we have to do a project, and then that gets us back."



Awards

- 2016 Honor Award in Analysis and Planning, Sustainable Design and Disaster Recovery in Mapleton, Iowa. Iowa Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2014 Honor Award in Analysis and Planning, Sustainable Design and Disaster Recovery in Mapleton, Iowa. Central States American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2008 One of 150 Iowa State University Contributions That Changed the World, ISU Alumni Association
- 2006 Outstanding Planning Award for a Program, American Planning Association
Honor Award in Analysis and Planning, Central States American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2005 Outstanding Planning Award, Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association
Honor Award in Analysis and Planning, Iowa Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2003 Environmental Excellence Award, Excellence in Creating Livable Communities, Federal Highway Administration

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

Community and Economic Development

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