Community Visioning
2010 Annual Report

Contents

Executive Summary

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

Iowa's Living Roadways consists of the Community Visioning Program and the Projects Program. The Community Visioning Program provides planning and landscape design assistance to Iowa's small communities. The Projects Program funds the planting of native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees along transportation corridors. Both Visioning and Project Programs provide assistance to Iowa communities with populations of fewer than 10,000, because these smaller communities often lack the resources and expertise needed to design and implement landscape enhancements.

The 2010 visioning communities are Carson, Clarksville, Estherville, Gunder, Hudson, Independence, Knoxville, Rockford, Rolfe, St. Olaf, Story City, Walford, and West Liberty.

The sustainability and success of the program is evident by the number of actual communities it had touched. Since Iowa's Living Roadways was created in 1996, 172 communities have participated in the Visioning Program and 346 communities have received grants from the Projects Program.
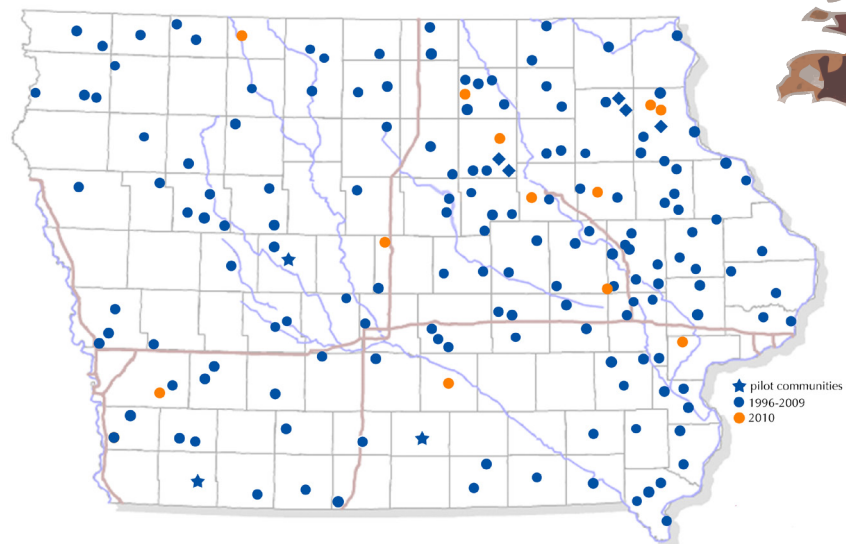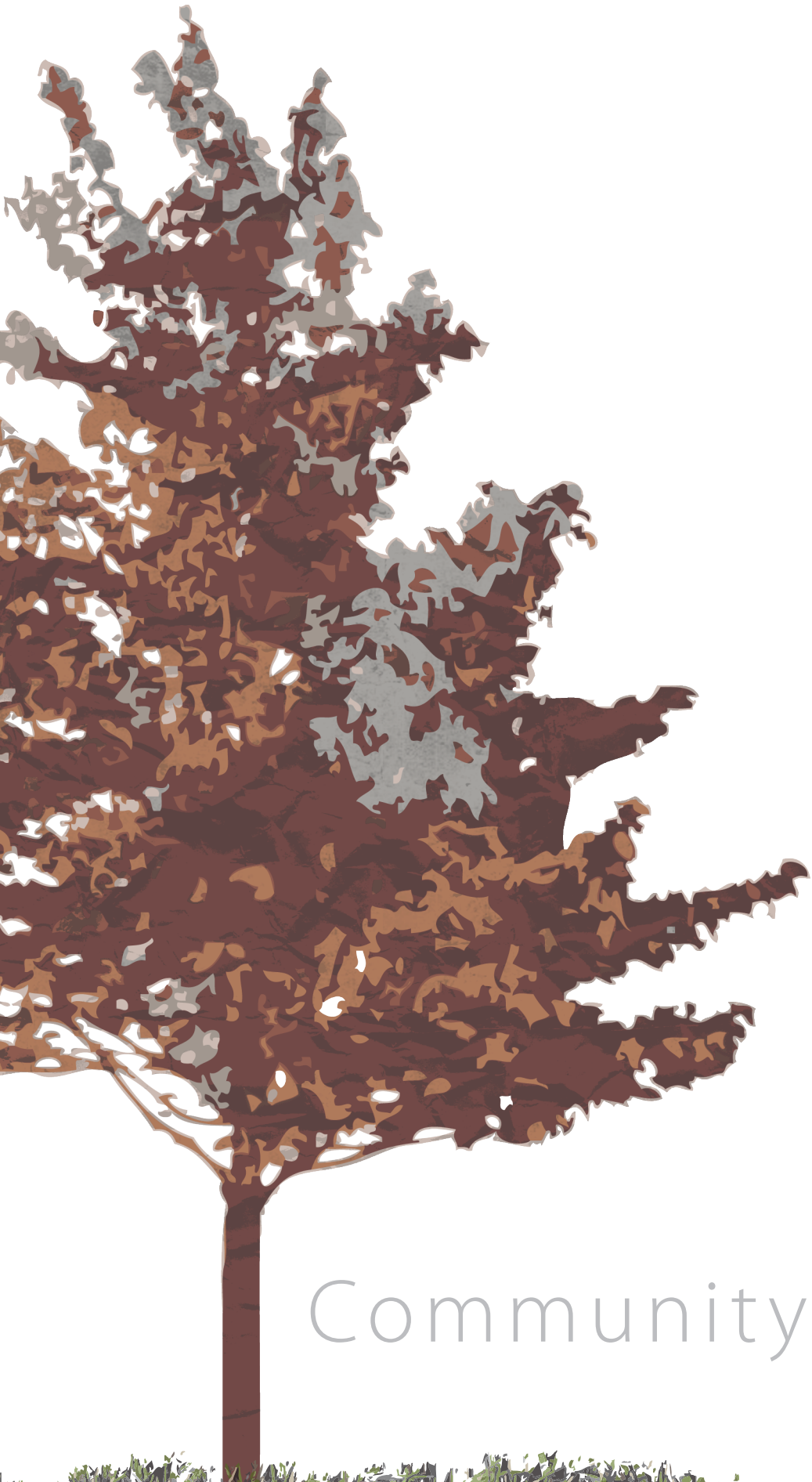
Community Pages
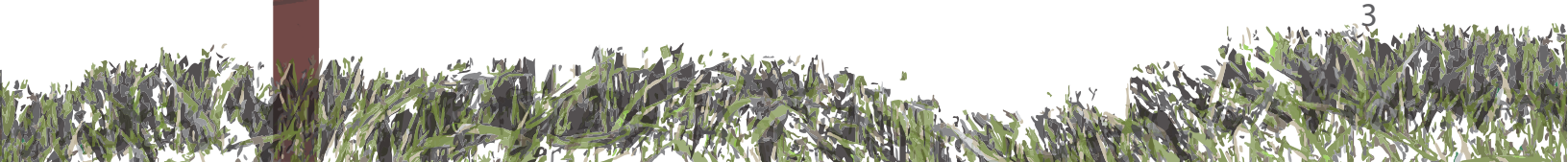
Carson

Trees Forever Facilitator: Brad Riphagen
Landscape Architects: David Stokes, Erik Becker
Intern: John Simmons

Carson was founded in 1881 to provide a depot for the Burlington and Rock Island Railroad next to the Nishnabotna River in Pottawattamie County. It has grown and prospered since, and has a current population of 668. Located only 30 minutes from Council Bluffs and Omaha, Nebraska, the city is home to many commuters, and residents consider it a bedroom community. Carson is situated between Highway 92 and Highway 59. The highways serve as the main corridors into the community.

Historic Carson was originally located entirely east of the Nishnabotna and north of Highway 92, but more recent development has taken place on both sides of those boundaries. Community members want to improve connectivity across the river and across Highway 92, to improve both safety and social connections.

Carson's downtown features a spruce-lined boulevard, historic storefronts and Victorian houses. West of downtown, on the east bank of the Nishnabotna, there is a recreational area that includes a rodeo grounds, city park, baseball field, and less-structured natural areas. The Carson Rodeo, held each summer at the rodeo grounds, is a source of pride, tourism, and revenue for the community.

With more than 3,100 vehicles traveling Highway 92 every day, Carson's main improvement focus is the streetscape, natural environment, and safety of the Highway 92 corridor. Through the visioning process, the design team helped the steering committee expand on its initial priorities to develop the following concepts:

- Entry and Way-finding Signage: Enhance visual appearance; use cohesive design throughout community; replace existing signage with more legible options; add directional signage.

- Highway 92 and Commercial Street: Heighten sense of arrival; lead visitors to downtown with cohesive lighting and banner scheme; mitigate effects of storm water; improve sidewalks.

- Downtown: Adding vintage lighting with banners, install vegetation for stormwater mitigation; add seating and vegetation to the retaining wall; incorporate curb bump-outs and widen sidewalks to better accommodate pedestrians; create a pocket park for outdoor events and seating.

- Broadway Boulevard: Restore the boulevard between Locust and Central Streets; create designated parking lanes at the corner of each block; visually narrow roadway to slow traffic; install rain garden curb bump-outs; install a roundabout at the Broadway and Central Street intersection as a focal point.

- Trail Development: Connect residents on the east and west sides of the river; connect to the prairie preserve with a pedestrian bridge; expand the trail under Highway 92; add intepretive signage to highlight natural features.

Steering Committee
Brianne Duede, chair
Richelle Alff
Lynn Cody
Randy Cody
Kim Gifford
Richard Griffen
Kristina Hansen
Mike Harvey
Donnie Hendrick
Kathy Hendricks
Sue Jones
Joyce McClain
Keith McClain
Randy Miller
Sue Miller
JoAnn Patrick
Ron Stillinger
Lyndon Taylor
Eric Weuve

Above: Two possible themes for new entryway and directional signage. The top row would complement an existing Carson Mill theme. The bottom row is inspired by the popular Carson Rodeo.
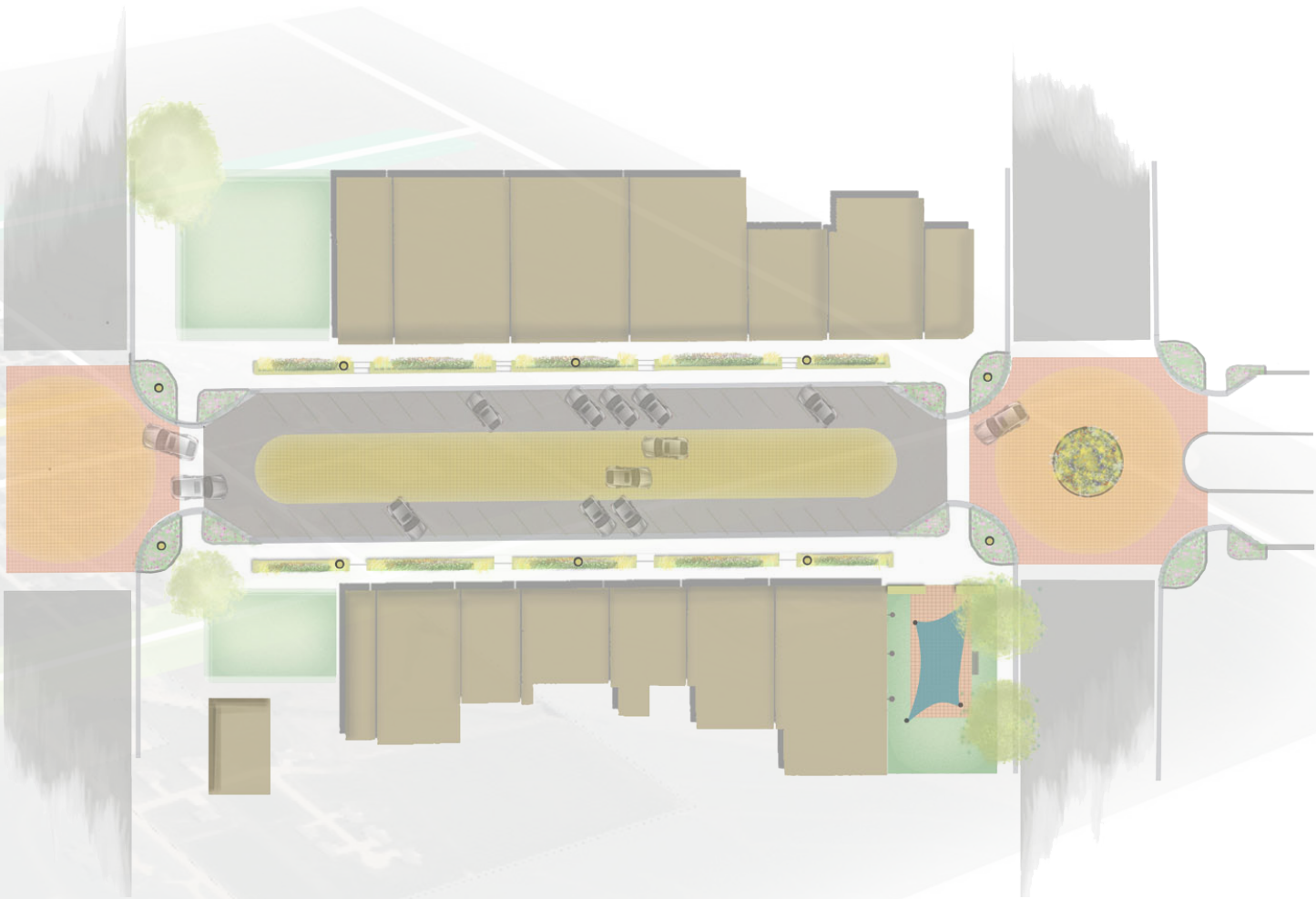
Top: *The proposed downtown improvements include wider sidewalks, curb bump-outs and new pocket parks.*

Bottom left: *A roundabout at the existing flagpole would create a focal point for the business district and Broadway Boulevard.*
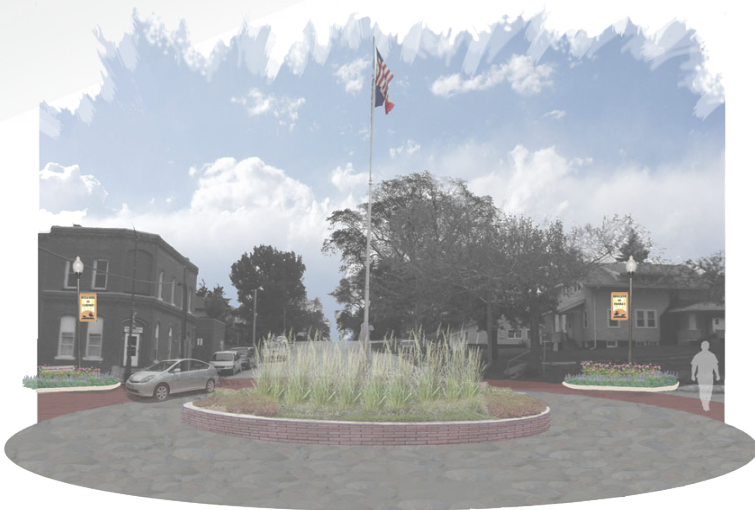
Bottom right: *Restoring the median and creating curbside parking on Broadway Boulevard would re-establish the boulevard's visual prominence.*

Clarksville

Trees Forever Facilitator: Patty Petersen
Landscape Architects: David Yocca, Jason Navota, Lybra Lindke
Interns: Martyn Albert, Eric Doll, Chris Riggert

The city of Clarksville is located in Butler County along the Shell Rock River in northeast Iowa. The town is situated only 30 minutes northwest of Waterloo and Cedar Falls, allowing access to the amenities of surrounding larger cites while still providing small-town charm to its 1,441 residents.
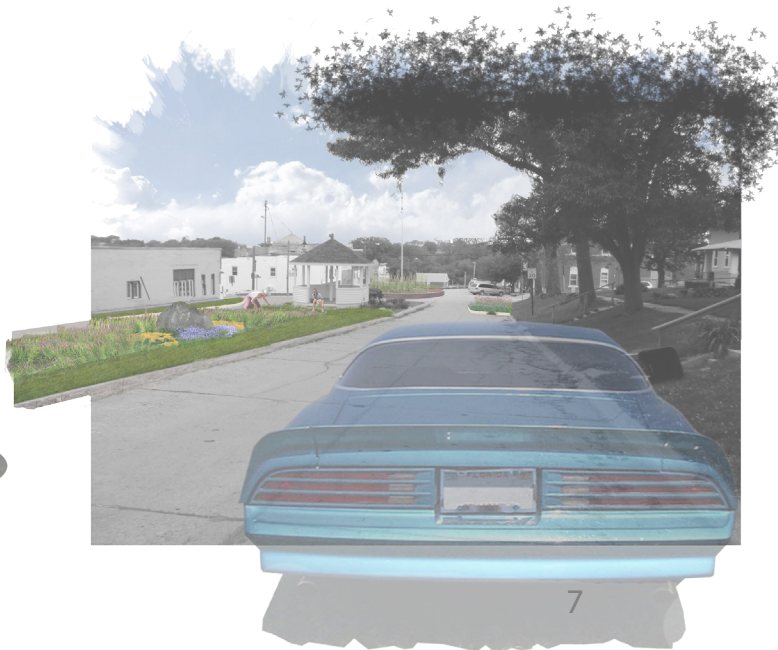
Originally founded in 1850 by John Heery, Clarksville was not officially established until 1853. Today, the area offers space for recreation and business but needs visual improvement, especially to the downtown area. Outdated entryway signage, deteriorating sidewalks and unsafe railroad crossings are aspects of the town's transportation system that Clarksville wanted to address through community visioning. The Clarksville visioning committee built upon these initial priorities through the visioning process and decided on the following concepts:

- Signs and Way-finding: Use community logo and a consistent design theme to promote local identity; help direct local traffic to community destinations and facilitate way-finding.

- South (Heery) Ponds: Beautify the ponds and enhance wildlife habitat through use of pond restorers; extend Rolling Prairie Nature Trail to embrace ponds; promote education highlighting ecological value of the ponds through signage.

- Main Street: Attach pedestrian-scale historic lighting that uses high-efficiency LED technology onto the existing light poles; provide shade and greenery by planting trees in new curb bump-outs that will replace a few of the diagonal parking stalls; install benches and other streetscape amenities and furnishings with a consistent character that celebrates Clarksville's history and identity.

- Pioneer Square Intersection: Install corner bump-outs to reduce pedestrian crossing distance, improve safety, and provide space for landscaping and street furnishings; move stop sign from middle of intersection to corner bump-outs or install a small planter at the base of the sign; incorporate brick pavers or painted pavement and street corner detailing to make pedestrian crosswalks more visible and attractive.

- Pioneer Park: Create murals of historic scenes for the building façades that frame both sides of the park; install planting beds around the park sign; install planting beds, a seat wall and a brick-paved walking path along the southern edge of the park; add one or two historic light fixtures along the edges of the park.

- Clark's Park and Reading Street (Main Street Alley): Develop new pocket park, Clark's Park, in the vacant lot and adjacent parcel on Main Street; replicate the historic bandstand in Reading Park, and add benches or picnic tables, turf grass, and planting beds; create new municipal parking lot next to Reading Park to serve the library, city hall, fire station, and downtown events.

Steering Committee
Jeff Kolb, chair
Meredith Borchardt
Charlene Clark
David Clark
Jim Elgin
Marilee Gray
Renae Hempen
Scott Hoodjer
Galen Jones
Mayor David Kelm
Trent Poppe
Tina Schwartz

Above top: Currently, an empty lot creates an uninviting stretch on Main Street.

Above bottom: A pocket park and mural would improve the look of Main Street and connect it to a new parking area and to Reading Park.

Above top: Brick pavers or painted pavement would
make crosswalks more visible and attractive at
Pioneer Square, the main intersection in Clarksville.

Above bottom: New planting beds, a seat wall and
a brick walking path along Pioneer Park's southern
edge would fit in with its role as a focal point and
the site of Clarksville's annual Pioneer Days.

Estherville

Trees Forever Facilitator: Barb Grabner-Kerns
Landscape Architects: Jon Jacobson, Lyle Pudwill
Intern: Brandon Losey

Estherville is a city of 6,800 residents, situated in Emmet County and home to the main campus of Iowa Lakes Community College in northwest Iowa. The town's claim to fame is the Estherville meteorite, a 700-pound meteorite that fell to earth in three pieces, the largest of which buried itself in 15 feet of ground a few miles north of the town in May 1879. The Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria, and the Estherville Public Library each display portions of the meteorite, which city officials call the largest meteor fall on record.

Estherville was named after Esther Ridley, the wife of Robert Ridley, who platted the town. In the early 1850s, Ridley constructed the first log cabin. He and his wife had the first baby born in the community. IN 1882, Estherville became a railroad town, and at its peak, the Rock Island Railroad employed more than 500 people in Estherville. Today, the community has the advantage of being situated at the intersection of Highways 4 and 9. There are many opportunities for improvement in Estherville. The community would like to improve the visual landscape of highway corridors and provide safe accessibility to walkable areas like the Regional Wellness Center and Fort Defiance State Park. The city would like to establish a trail or sidewalk network leading to areas currently inaccessible on foot.

Estherville applied to the visioning program to address the needs related to connectivity and beautification. The visioning process resulted in the following proposals:

- Entry Corridor: Install native plantings on the roadside leading up to and around new entry signs; make cosmetic improvements to the Highway 4 underpass; screen unsightly views; construct a permanent stone pillar gateway.

- Parks: Make cosmetic and structural improvements to the swinging bridge and surrounding space, including a new sign, side netting, LED lighting, and new paint; complete path system for both parks passing under Central Avenue Bridge; add picnic shelters and restroom facilities; add a new amphitheater/performance space; improve the basketball, tennis court, and pool facilities; use site elements engineered to withstand annual flooding of the Des Moines River.

- Downtown/Way-finding: Use sign toppers and way-finding signage that incorporate Estherville's new branding scheme; improve the streetscape with bump-outs, paving details, and accent plantings; improve downtown building façade; add site furnishings, including trash receptacles, benches, and light poles.

- Library Square: Install corner seating/gathering spaces and brick and stone architectural monuments; construct corner bump-outs with brick paving details; create a Library Square art walk; convert 1st Avenue North into a pedestrian boulevard/event space.
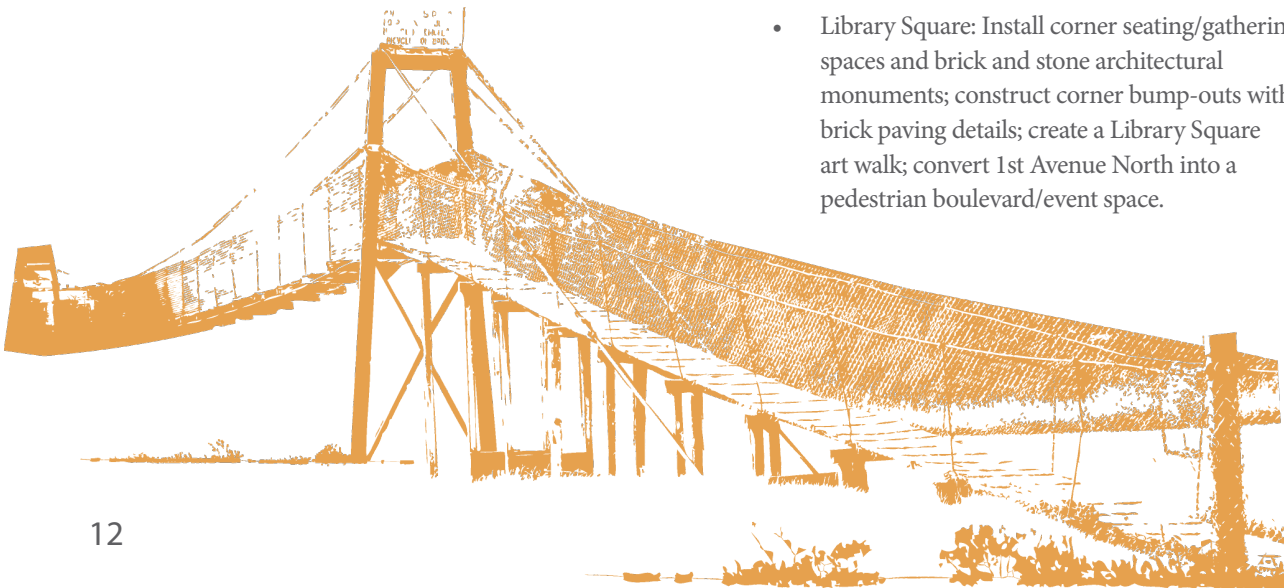
- Central Bridge: Install lighted architectural pillars and metal decorative railings incorporating branding logos; widen walkway for walkers and bikers; add container planted street trees, decorative light poles with Estherville identity banners, and accent plantings.

- Trail System: Create 10-foot multimodal paved path with trailheads at both the north and south ends; construct bioswale; plant trees and native grasses; add playground equipment, benches, and trash receptacles.

- Plant Palette: Install native plantings with multi-seasonal interest; increase biodiversity; accent existing and proposed architectural features; create a cohesive aesthetic for Estherville.

Above: A terraced amphitheater would provide a new performance space in North Riverside Park.

Below: Proposed lighted pillars, ornate railings and accent plantings on the Central Avenue bridge are inspired by the architecture of the library and Estherville's new entry signs.

Picnic shelter area

New parking

Swinging bridge

Restrooms/concessions

Central lawn event space/
ice rink

Proposed amphitheater

Central Avenue (Hwy 9)

Proposed path under
Central Avenue bridge

Proposed pool enhancements

Proposed basketball courts

Existing rock garden

Des Moines River

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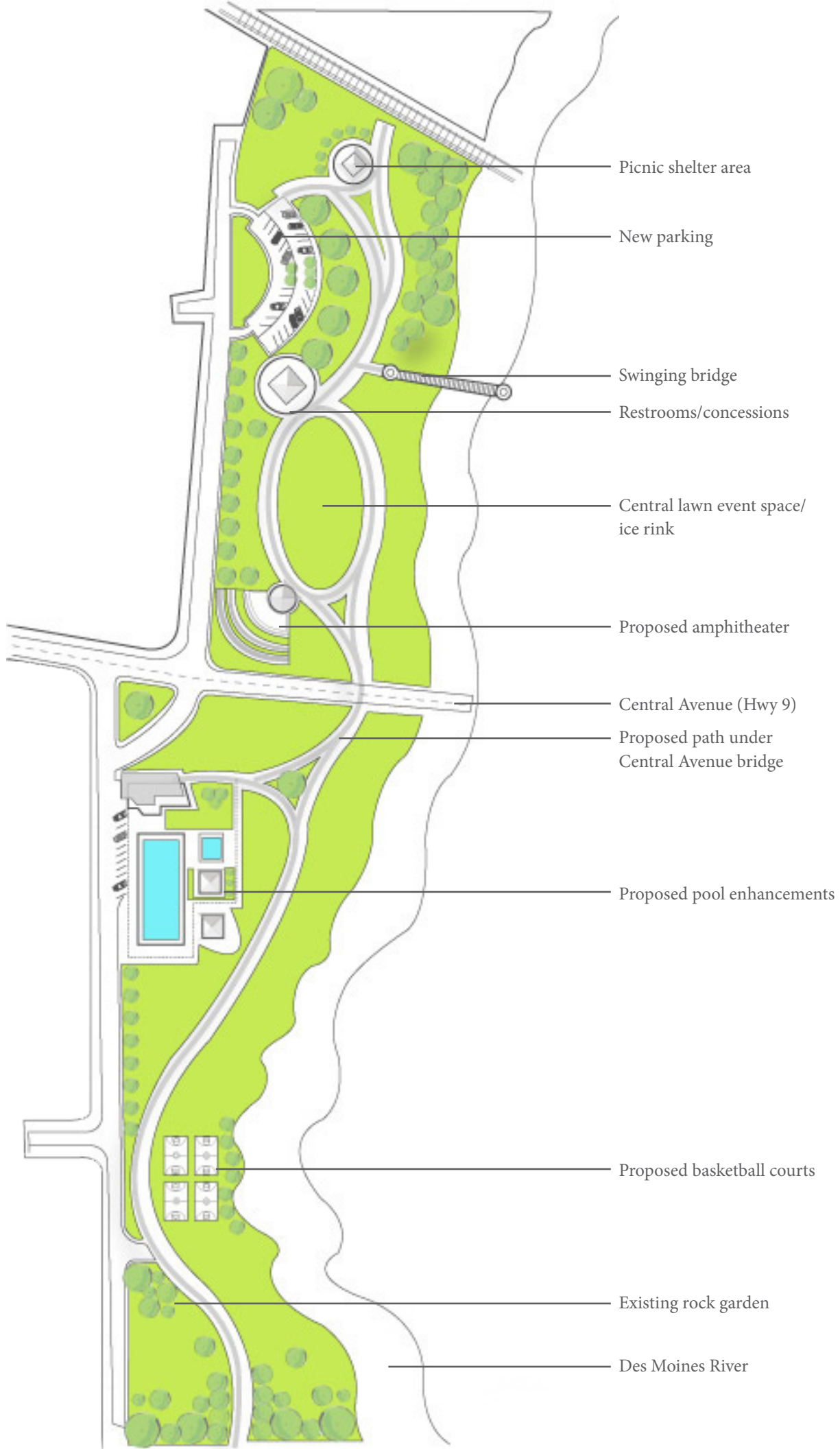
Gunder

Trees Forever Facilitator: Mark Pingenot
Landscape Architects: David Yocca, Jason Navota, Lybra Lindke
Interns: Martyn Albert, Eric Doll, Chris Riggert

Gunder is an unincorporated town of 27 residents in Clayton County, in the rolling hills of northeast Iowa. The town is located at the intersection of Gunder Road and Agate Road, between St. Olaf (pop. 136) and Clermont (pop. 800). The route from St. Olaf to Clermont forms a portion of the River Bluffs Scenic Byway, one of the outstanding transportation features of Clayton County.

The byway attracts visitors, sustaining the popular Irish Shanti restaurant (home of the Gunderburger) and the Gunder Inn. The Marion Lutheran Church is another attraction.
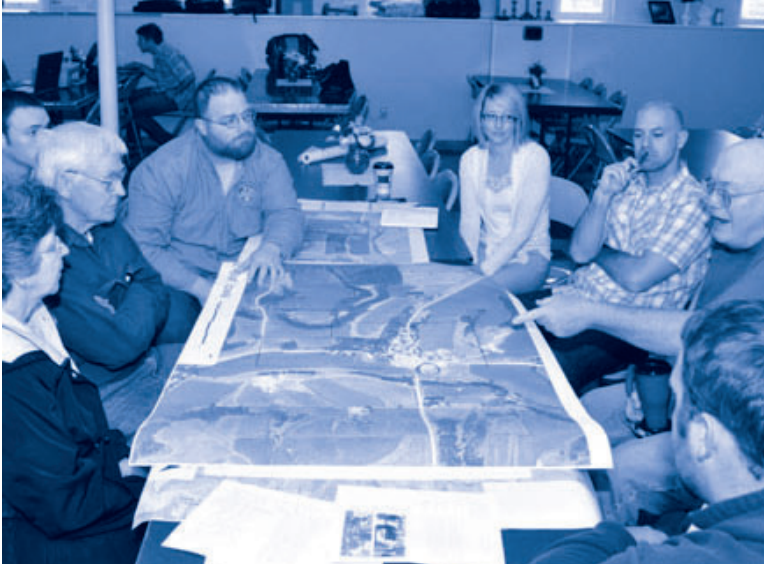
Gunder residents see great opportunities for enhancing the aesthetics and overall vision of their town. Gunder participated in the visioning process along with St. Olaf, a 136-person community east of Gunder, but the design team prepared separate sets of proposals for each town.

When St. Olaf and Gunder applied to the visioning program, the steering committee said it wanted to create a trail between the communities, create outdoor spaces for visitors, and improve signage. Through the visioning process, the design team helped the steering committee expand on its initial priorities to develop the following concepts:

- Regional Connections: Connect local cuisine via food tour; connect recreational amenities throughout the River Bluffs region; encourage sustainable food operations; accommodate community interactions.

- Entry Sign: Enhance aesthetics of existing signs; showcase of local materials; create unity between sign design materials and community aesthetics.

- Gunder Road Traffic Calming: Reduce the speed limit and/or post signs indicating reduced speed; add on-road pavement markings to indicate a change in road context; pave gravel shoulders; add landscaping, trees, planting beds or window boxes as cues to drivers that they are entering an inhabited area.

- Beautification: Make structural repairs/ replacements and façade improvements to commercial buildings on the north side of Gunder Road; add landscape elements including trees and small planting beds or planter boxes on or adjacent to the buildings.

- Drainage: Install a rain garden in the culvert in front of the auxiliary parking for the Irish Shanti north of Gunder Road to filter and infiltrate rainwater runoff, remove pollutants, and reduce the amount of water that enters the drainage ditch system and area rivers and streams.

- Sundial Memorial: Remove damaged shrubs to improve visibility of the site from the road; frame the monument with ornamental plantings; add seating, limestone paving stones, and a standing area; plant a mix of native grasses and forbs in the adjacent roadside ditch to provide seasonal color.

8 - 10'   5'   24 - 26'   5'

Above top: *One option for incorporating bike lanes into the road corridors would add a separate paved path on one side of the road.*

Above bottom: *Formal ornamental plantings would complement the Sundial Memorial, a roadside tribute to the servicemen of World War I.*

Above: A rain garden in the auxiliary parking lot of the Irish Shanti restaurant would help capture, filter, and infiltrate runoff to reduce flooding.

Left: The commercial buildings along Gunder Road have fallen into disrepair.

Bottom Left: Façade improvements to the buildings along Gunder Road could incorporate white paint and red trim, to match a former DX service station.

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Hudson

Trees Forever Facilitator: Mark Pingenot
Landscape Architect: Craig Ritland
Interns: Allie Loecke and Annie Remmerde

Hudson is a community of 2,135 nestled in the largely agricultural lands of southwestern Black Hawk County in northeast Iowa, five miles south of the Cedar Falls and Waterloo metropolitan area. The city was named for the Hudson River of New York. Three major highways conveniently intersect in Hudson, offering easy access to the larger cities nearby. However, Highway 63 and Highway 58 geographically divide Hudson, interrupting the safe flow of pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

The existing trail system in Hudson is far-reaching. Trails connect Hudson to Cedar Falls and Waterloo, as well as bringing visitors to the downtown area. These trails require constant maintenance, vary in surface type, and exhibit no characteristics unique to Hudson. The following proposals take into account the community's desires for trail safety and landscape enhancement, as well as the community's overall vision for Hudson:

- Multi-use Trails: Extend the Sergeant Road Trail; complete a loop of the Eldora Road Trail; create two new trails.

- Black Hawk Creek Nature Trail Access: Construct a soft trail beginning at the town's golf course and extending to the Hudson treatment plant and beyond; provide parking and a trailhead; eventually extend the trail to the Waterloo system.

- Highway 63 Corridor: Improve safety for pedestrians and motorists with a pedestrian underpass or roundabout that is integrated with the trail extensions.

- Highway 63 Roundabout: Construct a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 63 and Eldora Road to slow traffic and provide safe pedestrian crossing areas.

- Intersection of Highways 63 and 58: Plant street trees on or near school properties along Highway 58 for screening and creating a green effect for motorists.

- Pedestrian Underpass: Construct an underpass on Highway 63 near the intersection of Schrock Road to accommodate pedestrian traffic generated by the school, the youth sports complex, and proposed trail extensions.

- Hudson Depot Museum: Make the appearance of the musuem from Highway 63 more appealing by removing shrubs and repainting the depot; refurbish the sign; add new sidewalks and parking.

- Way-finding Signage: Implement a DOT-approved directional sign along Highway 63 that identifies key destinations in Hudson; create banners for downtown Hudson to complement the way-finding signage along the highway.

Top left: *Schoolchildren living east of Highway 63 now have to cross the highway at its intersection with Schrock Road, where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour.*

Middle: *An underpass would provide a safe route across the highway and could be integrated with planned trail extensions.*

Below: *A new youth sports complex and development east of Highway 63 have increased the need for a safe highway crossing.*

Pedestrian underpass
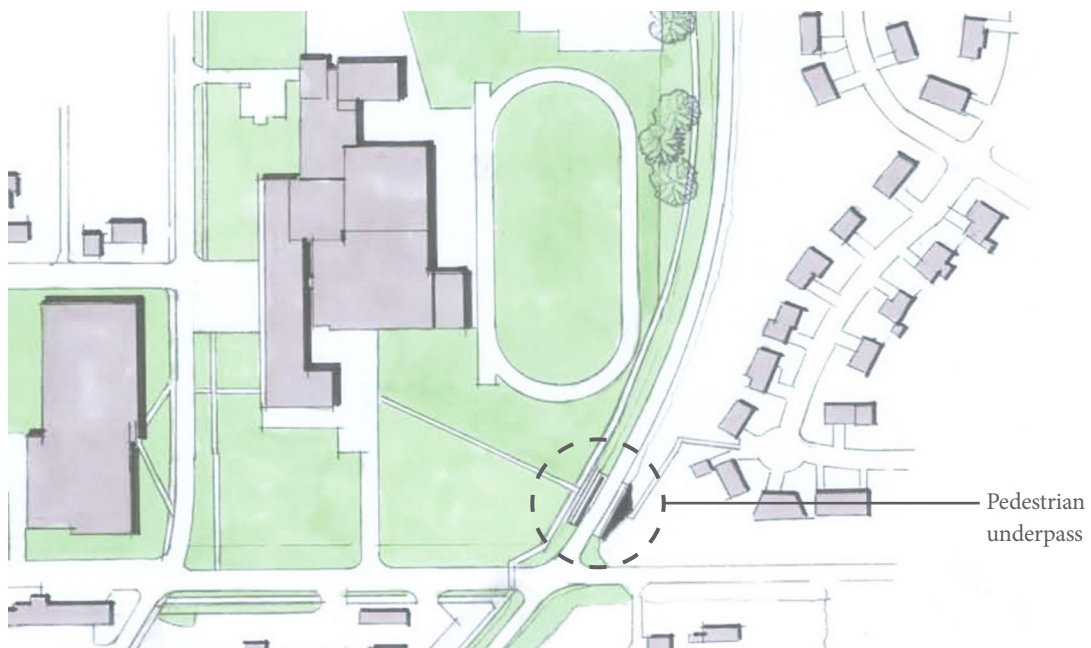
Above top: An undeveloped corridor provides an opportunity to extend the popular Sergeant Road Trail.

Above bottom: The corridor is wide enough for water course improvements and tree plantings that would give the trail extension a parkway atmosphere.

Right: The Highway 63 corridor was the main focus of the visioning committee and design team.

Regional trail connection

Roundabout

Pedestrian underpass

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Independence

Trees Forever Facilitator: Patty Petersen
Landscape Architect: Craig Ritland
Interns: Allie Loecke and Annie Remmerde

Founded in 1847, the city of Independence is nestled in Buchanan County in northeast Iowa along the scenic Wapsipinicon River, a treasured Protected Waters Area known for its natural beauty. In 1853 the town had 12 inhabitants, a blacksmith, a sawmill, and a handful of stores. Since then, Independence has grown into a thriving city with a population of 6,014.

Since 1866, the town has been known for its horse racing and is home to two of the fastest racing horses in the world. In August 1890, more than 10,000 people attended events at the Rush Park racetrack.

Independence is also known for the Wapsipinicon Feed Mill and dam, first operational in 1854 and known for producing "Wapsi" brand poultry and stock feed. The mill today is the cornerstone of the community and is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. It serves as a tourist attraction for visitors and locals alike. The Independence Motor Speedway is another popular attraction. During the summer, close to 3,000 autoracing fans are drawn into the city each week. On the outskirts of the city is the Independence State Hospital, a historic and very large mental hospital.

Independence has completed several enhancement projects to its main highway corridors to improve safety, but the Independence visioning committee would like to further beautify the landscape along Highways 150 and 20 to build on the work they have already completed. The following proposals were developed by the design team to aid Independence in this process:

- Highway 150 Corridor: Create a parkway from the intersection of Highways 150 and 20 to the Wapsipinicon bridge; create a trail along the drainage stream and through shade trees; expand the campground with electrical and water hookups; screen the campground from highway view with plantings.

- First Street Pedestrian Route: Extend the sidewalk from the school to the intersection with 20th Avenue NW to increase safety and complete part of a planned trail loop that links to Liberty Trail.

- Signage: Incorporate the new patriotic sign theme into gateway and way-finding signage; mount gateway signage on a brick structure that mimics the brick of the mill; add metal letters with a simple font to the front façade of the Wapsipinicon Mill.

- Riverwalk Park Trail Extension: Extend the trail through to the 1st Street sidewalk; redesign the parking area and replace the stairs up to Brimmer Park; plant trees along the trail extension to screen adjacent commercial properties and provide shade.

- Downtown: Restore historic storefront architecture and enhance the downtown streetscape according to the Main Street Program philosophy.
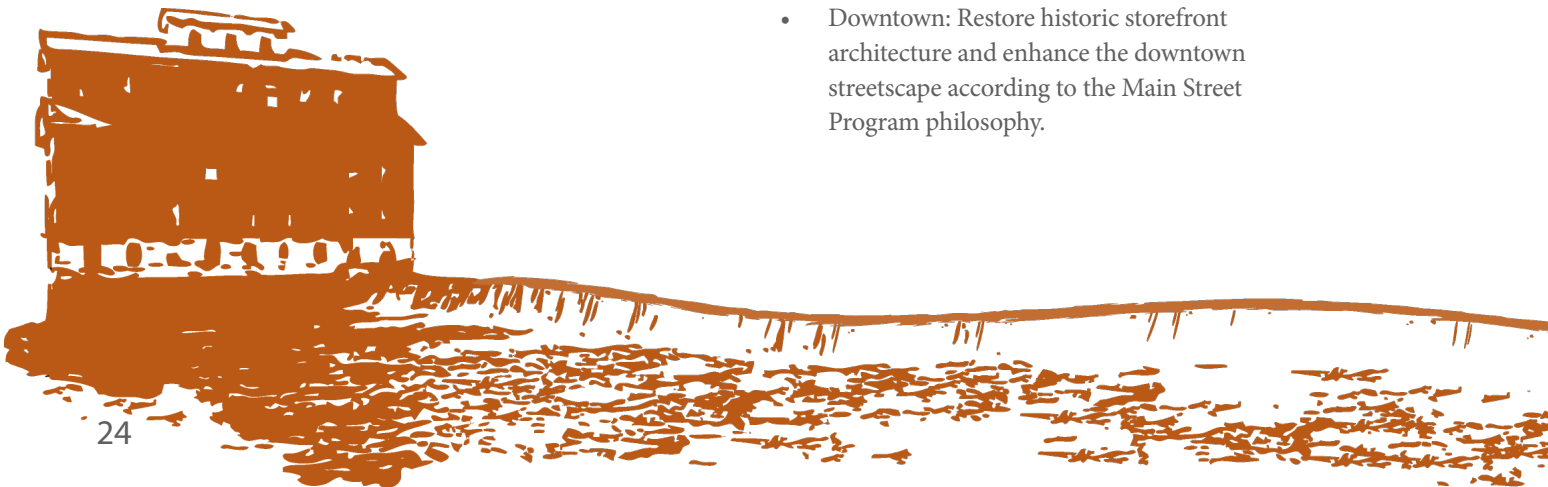
Steering Committee
Barbara Rundle, chair
Bonita Davis
Steve Diers
Cheryl Hand
Kriss McGraw
Joe Olsen
Tammy Rasmussen
Mayor Carl Scharff
Mary Weber

Existing Riverwalk

End of Existing Trail

2nd Street NE

Proposed Park and Trail Extension

Renovated
Parking Lot

Wapsipinicon Mill
and Dam

Proposed Ramp Access

Brimmer Park

2nd Avenue NE

1st Street

Liberty
Park

Top Left: *A short extension of the current river walk would connect it to the First Street sidewalk*

Left: *Sidewalk renovations would improve the appearance and safety of downtown Independence.*
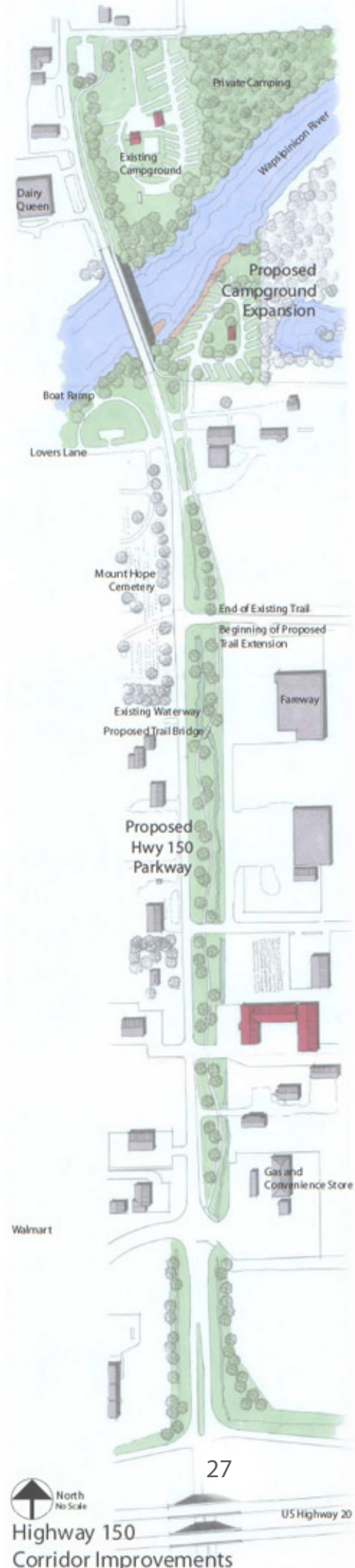
Top: Historic details are mixed with more recent renovations in many downtown storefronts.

Middle: Restoring the historic storefronts would improve the appearance of downtown, preserve its architectural heritage, boost marketing for businesses and promote community pride.

Right: The design team proposed developing the Highway 150 corridor into a parkway with a trail extension and tree plantings.

Private Camping

Wapsipinicon River

Existing Campground

Dairy Queen

Proposed Campground Expansion

Boat Ramp

Lovers Lane

Mount Hope Cemetery

End of Existing Trail

Beginning of Proposed Trail Extension

Fareway

Existing Waterway

Proposed Trail Bridge

Proposed Hwy 150 Parkway

Gas and Convenience Store

Walmart

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North
No Scale

US Highway 20

Highway 150
Corridor Improvements

Knoxville

Trees Forever Facilitator: Brad Riphagen
Landscape Architect: John Micka
Intern: Bruce Niedermyer

The city of Knoxville is home to 7,731 residents, first-rate recreational facilities, a growing downtown, historic buildings, and tree-lined neighborhoods. Located in Marion County, just 25 miles southeast of Des Moines and adjacent to Iowa's largest lake, Lake Red Rock, Knoxville is the nation's sprint car capital. The Knoxville Raceway brings over 50,000 visitors to town each year.

Other local attractions include the Marion County Historical Village, museums, and community events such as "Pioneer Days," "Bike Nights," and a farmers market. Knoxville was originally occupied by Native Americans and was later sold by the Sac and Fox in the New Purchase of 1842. Joseph Robinson and James Montgomery founded the city in 1845 and named it after Revolutionary War hero General Henry Knox. Knoxville is also the birthplace of the Iowa state flag. Today, the community is home to large employers such as 3M, Hormel, and the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Knoxville's goals for community enhancement focus on way-finding and entryway signage. The steering committee would like to direct visitors to local attractions and downtown with up-to-date signage, and present a more favorable image of the community by making entryways more inviting. In addition, the completion of a sidewalk network and expansion of greenways throughout the community are current transportation-related issues. During the visioning process, the community identified

its highest ranked priorities and developed the following concepts to strengthen the local economy, provide additional recreational opportunities, and improve the landscape of the town:

- Iowa Highway 92/5: Create a beautiful and inviting landscaped corridor that attracts people to Knoxville; alleviate highway hypnosis for drivers traveling long distances; reduce snow drifting and icing on the roadway.

- Iowa Highway 14: Enhance the compensatory wetland migration site at the south entrance to Knoxville; provide a safe route for pedestrians to cross Highway 14; beautify the corridor to attract more people to Knoxville; create visual dominance for the entrance to the Knoxville Raceway.

- Way-finding Signage: Inform visitors of amenities available in Knoxville through way-finding signage; locate signs in the most significant areas; create way-finding signage for downtown to be implemented with the new streetscape.

- Entrance Signage: Showcase entrances to Knoxville to better communicate its city boundary; create sustainable designs as part of implementation; use the current sign design to help reduce costs; establish a rain garden at the proposed east entrance sign location.

- Competine Trail and County Trail Plan: Connect Knoxville to other cities and amenities in the area, provide longer trail routes for people to use while exercising; provide a safe route for pedestrians to cross Highway 14; establish way-finding kiosks and bicycle rest areas.
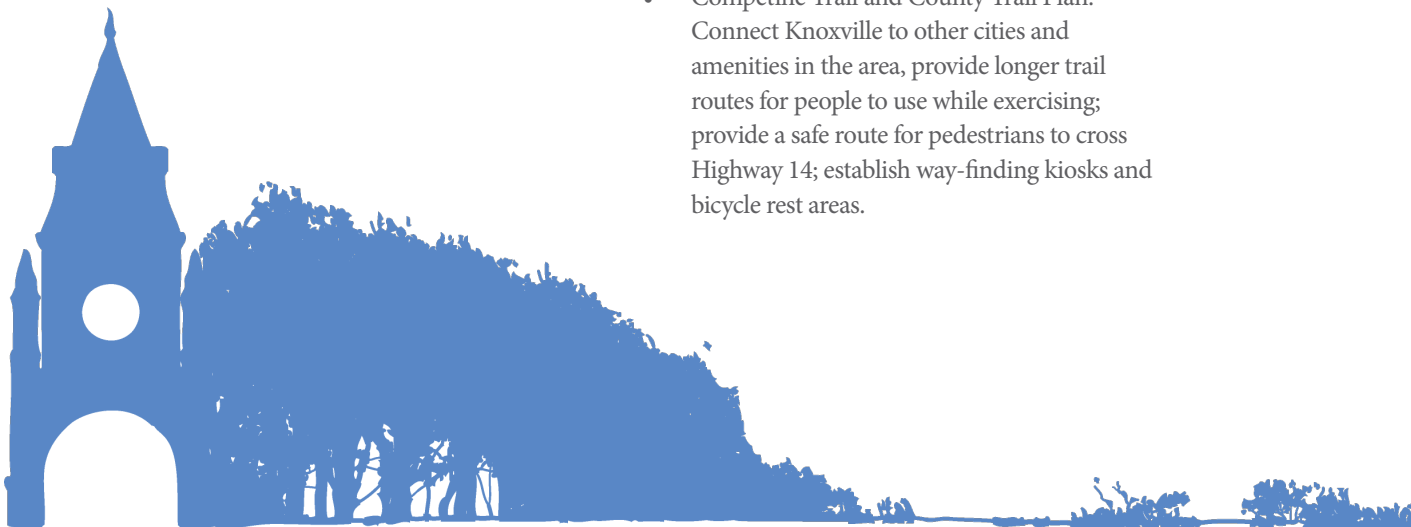
Steering Committee
Dick Schrad, chair
Barb Adam
Brad Crossett
Bob Edwards
Terry Edwards
Ted Eller
Carolyn Formanek
Ron Hulse
Ross Iddings
Maralyn Jordan
Jay Jung
Elsie Kemp
Nila Landsperger
Jeff May
Ryan Richardson
Joyce Smith
Pennie Sommar
Harv Sprafka
Candi Stevens
Kevin Stittsworth
Cheryl Thiel

Top left: *Highway 14 is the most heavily used entrance into Knoxville.*

Top right: *A pedestrian bridge over Highway 14 could be worked into an extension of the Competine Trail.*

Middle: *The design team created a conceptual trail map that could be displayed in a kiosk at the Bessie Spaur Butterfly Garden, where the Competine Trail currently ends.*

Right: *Wildflower and tree plantings along the Highway 92/5 corridor would create a beautiful entrance, reduce the risk of highway hypnosis, and cut down on snow drifting.*

Above: *Knoxville is in the process of improving its downtown streetscape to emphasize the downtown's historical legacy. Way-finding would fit in well with this style of design.*

Bottom: *Knoxville can create a unified appearance with coordinated entrance signs, enhancement markers for Department of Transportation signs, and downtown way-finding signs.*

Rockford

Trees Forever Facilitator: Meredith Borchardt
*Landscape Architects: David Yocca, Jason Navota, Lybra Lindke*
Interns: Marty Albert, Eric Doll, Chris Riggert

Founded in the 1856, Rockford is a rural community in northeast Iowa located at the confluence of the Shell Rock and Winnebago Rivers. The town is home to 967 residents, historical buildings from the late 1800s and early 1900s, and three city parks that provide camping, river access, and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors alike. The area is known for its limestone outcrops and nearby Fossil and Prairie Park and Nature Center. The park and center bring in several hundred visitors throughout the year.

The existing community entrances are well maintained but do little to invite visitors into town. In addition, Rockford offers no walking or biking trails within its city limits, detracting from the overall community atmosphere. Native landscaping would also add to the general aesthetics of the town and enhance the natural environment for residents and visitors.

The Rockford visioning committee has great expectations for the community's future. Through the visioning process, the steering committee developed its initial ideas and made a prioritized list of projects it would like to see accomplished in Rockford. Based on these priorities, the design team developed the following design proposals:

- Fossil and Prairie Trail Extension: Improve the quality of the existing trail; provide safe alternative recreation routes; provide better pedestrian connections to Rockford amenities.

- Boulevard: Unify Main Avenue from the boulevard to downtown; filter and infiltrate rainwater runoff via a bio-infiltration swale; beautify the streetscape; relocate overhead utilities.

- Downtown: Add pedestrian-scale site amenities such as historic lighting; construct curb bump-outs for pedestrian safety; green the downtown streetscape with vegetation; improve rainwater infiltration via rain gardens.

- Pocket Park: Create a pocket park in the vacant lot on Main Avenue with an informal amphitheater space, planting beds, shade trees, slab benches, and a walking path connecting downtown to Riverfront Park.

- Riverfront Park: Create a disc golf course near the campground; plant flood-tolerant trees and a naturalized river edge buffer; create formal access to the river and seating areas using limestone slabs or benches; add picnic tables and shelters; fill in the depression in the park to create an ice skating rink.
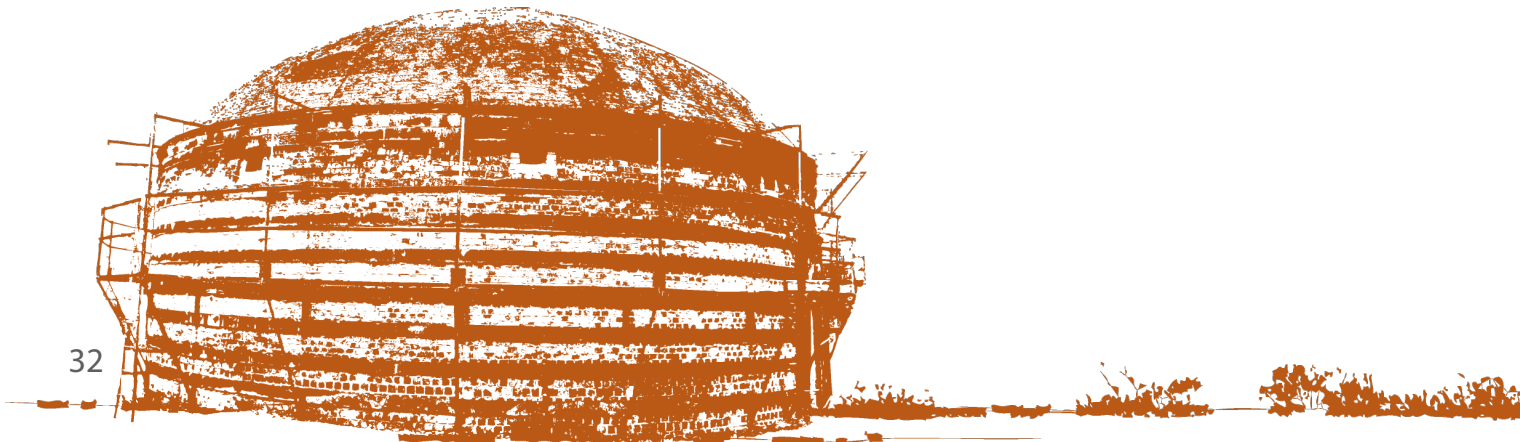
Steering Committee
Dennis Ginther, chair
Chris Diggins
Sabrina Dow
Adam Enabnit
Larry Hicok
Sharon Hicok
Angie Johnson
Caley Johnson
Cody Murray
Cory Murray
Dave Petersen
Heidi Reams
Dusty Rolando
Randy Schweitzer

Boulevard Enhancement Plan

0 25' 50' 100' 150' 250'

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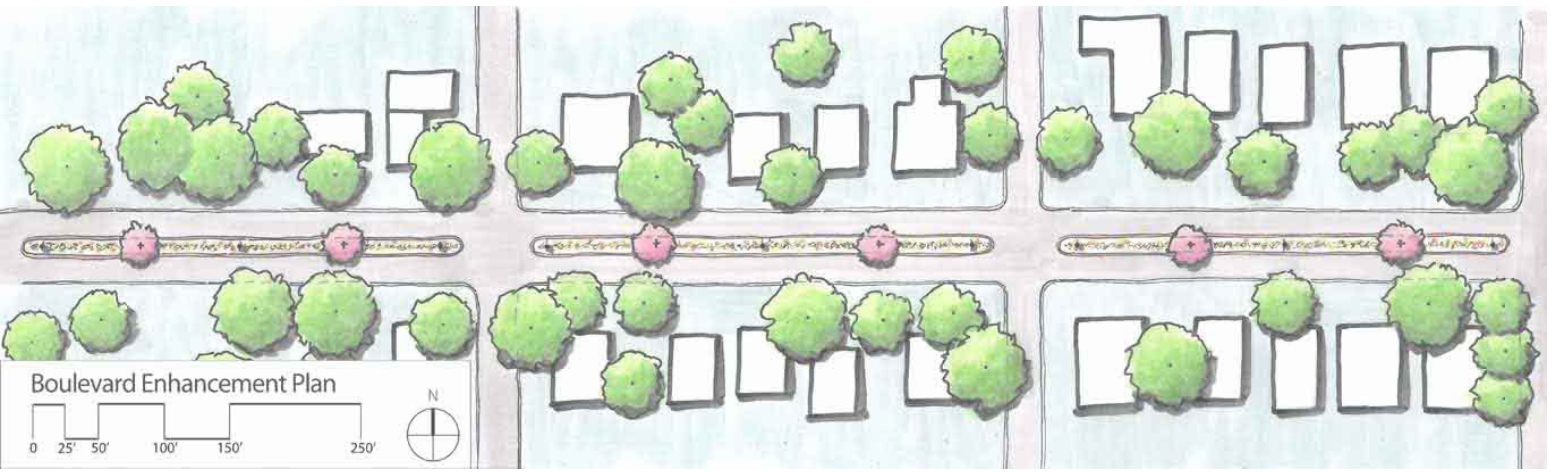
Top: *The existing medians are to be converted into bio-infiltration swales which will capture rainwater runoff and allow for slow percolation.*

Middle: *A cross section of the proposed concept for downtown Main Avenue showing mid block bump-outs replacing parking stalls.*

Right: *Boulevard concept illustrating the bio-infiltration median gardens and street lighting with banners.*

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Top left: Existing conditions of the trail bridge.

Middle left: Persepctive of improved Fossil and prairie trail bridge over the Winnebago River.

Bottom: The Riverfront Park will expand recreational opportunities into the area planned for FEMA buyouts and improves the river edge with landscaping and access points for fishing.

Rolfe

Trees Forever Facilitator: Barb Grabner-Kerns
Landscape Architects: Brett Douglas, Jen DeWall
Interns: Andrew Kraemer

Rolfe, home of 675 residents, is located along Pilot and Crooked Creek in north central Iowa on the eastern edge of Pocahontas County. The town was originally located six miles north, but because of railroad development, it was moved in 1881 to its present location six miles south. Old Rolfe still draws visitors to the town, as well as nearby attractions. Meredith Park, the Viking Stone, and the Grotto of Redemption all are close.

North-south Highway 15 is the main road coming into Rolfe, and County Highway C26 also runs east-west through town. The Union-Pacific Railroad goes through Rolfe, providing rail service to at least one local business and is a potential draw for new businesses. The Three Rivers Trail, a 32-mile bike trail, begins in Rolfe, and space for a trailhead park was recently acquired by the city.

Rolfe's residents are proud of their town's history and excited about improving its future. The following proposals take into account the community's desires and visions for the enhancement of Rolfe:

- Three Rivers Trail/Trailhead Park: Extend the trail through town to Sunset Ridge Park and create a plan for newly acquired land for a trailhead park to offer camping and recreational amenities along the trail.

- Garfield Street: Construct bump-outs at the corners of the commercial zones to provide space for trees, shorten pedestrian crosswalks and slow traffic; identify crosswalks with paving patterns; add signage and "SCHOOL" pavement markings prior to the intersection; add amenities such as benches, bike racks, and updated lighting.

- Signage: Create interpretive and way-finding signage that reflects Rolfe's identity.

- Sunset Ridge Park: Improve existing amenities, create a sculpture walk and link to the Three Rivers Trail; prevent shoreline erosion by buiding a stone wall along the north and west edges of the pond and revegetating the area near the fishing dock.

- Farmers Market: 1) Modify the market layout so vehicles can back up to the sidewalk to vend their products; plant trees; create a central lawn and a stage area; paint murals on adjacent buildings; 2) enhance the existing layout creating a second row of vendors and using tensile shade structures to create gathering spaces.

- Dog Park: Create an area where residents can take their pets to run and play and increase the usage of Feldman Park.

- Bendixen Ball Fields: Improve amenities of the baseball diamonds, seating areas and vegetation.

- Sidewalks/Walking Tours: Improve the condition of sidewalks and create designated walking routes through town; develop walking tours highlighting Rolfe's history and culture.

- Trees: Increase the tree canopy along the major routes in Rolfe and restore the tree canopy along the neighborhood streets.
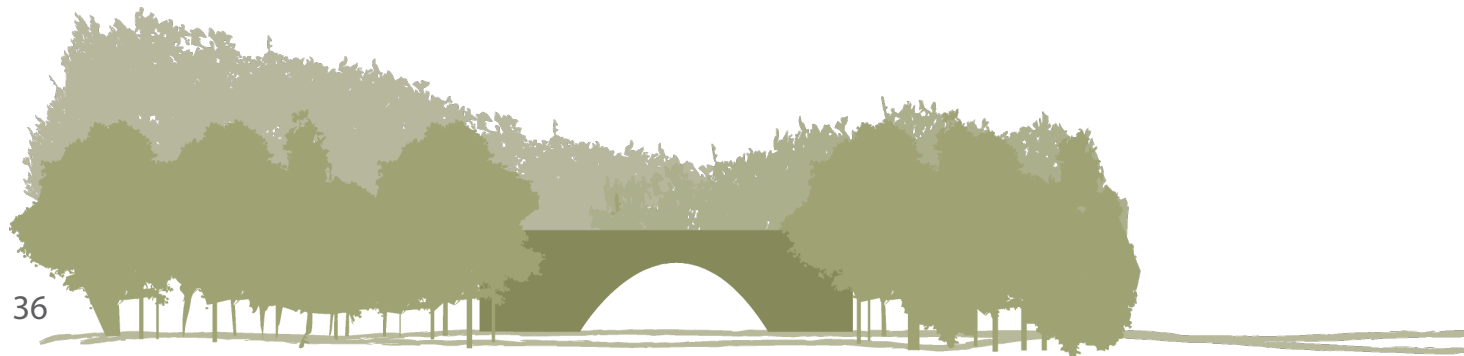
Steering Committee
Gloria Gunderson, chair
Linda Booth
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Don Fisk
Mary Fisk
Charles Gunderson
Joni Ham
Kristan Hennesay
Karen Johnson
Rick Johnson
Kevin Kerns
Pam Link
Glenn Markley
Sarah Munson
Dee Pederson
Lana Pratt
Stella Samson
Stephanie Sindt
Chuck Tilden
Penny Tilden

Top left: *The current end of the Three Rivers Trail has great potential for further development.*

Middle left: *Extending the trail further will create connectivity and buildings near the trail are opportune locations for signage and murals.*

Right: *This design for Trailhead Park combines many amenities in order to serve a wide range of uses for the community.*

Three Rivers Trail expansion to Trailhead Park

Three Rivers Trail

Campsites

Lawn

Park shelter

Nature play

Half-court basketball

Prairie

Railroad Street
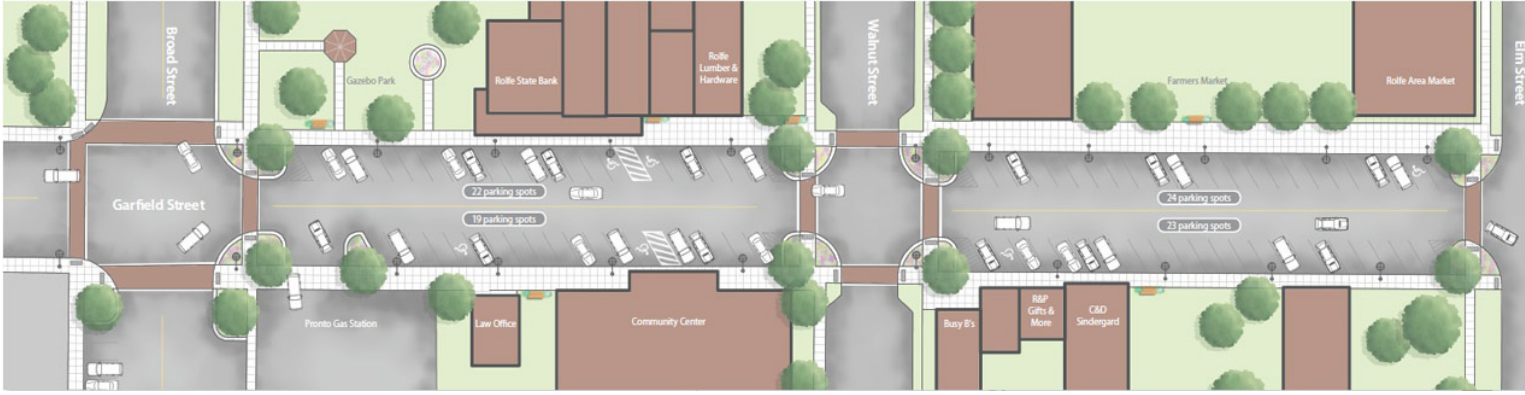
Top: *Improvements to Garfield Street include traffic-calming bump-outs that are locations for additional street-tree plantings.*

Middle: *Crosswalks are designed to stand out through the integration of colored pavement.*

Bottom: *This cohesive signage suite allows Rolfe to maintain a strong visual identity and makes navigation throughout town easier.*

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St. Olaf

Trees Forever Facilitator: Mark Pingenot
Landscape Architects: David Yocca, Jason Navota, Lybra Lindke
Interns: Martyn Albert, Eric Doll, Chris Riggert

St. Olaf is a valley town in Clayton County located five miles north of the Turkey River corridor and along the River Bluffs Scenic Byway (B65) and Fawn Hollow Road. The scenic byway, known as West Hill Street in town, serves as one of the main transportation features in Clayton County and produces more traffic than the small town of 136 would otherwise experience.

St. Olaf has a beautiful hilly landscape and local attractions. A potential draw is the Northeast Iowa Food Tour (a.k.a. the "Bust Yer Gut Tour"), including unique local specialties such as the "Thunderloin" pork tenderloin sandwich at the St. Olaf Tap.

St. Olaf community members see great opportunities for enhancing the aesthetics and overall vision of their town. St. Olaf participated in the visioning process along with Gunder, a 27-person community west of St. Olaf, but the design team prepared separate sets of proposals for each town.

When St. Olaf and Gunder applied to the visioning program, the steering committee said it wanted to improve St. Olaf's sidewalks, signage, walkways, and parks. Through the visioning process, the design team helped the steering committee expand on its initial priorities to develop the following concepts:

- Regional Connections: Connect local cuisine via a food tour; connect recreational amenities throughout the River Bluffs region; encourage sustainable food operations; accommodate community interactions via a trail network.

- Uff Da Park: Construct a new concession stand, picnic shelter and comfort station that include sustainable building elements; install bio-infiltration swales to improve water quality in Robert's Creek; improve parking area and entrances; add landscaping; install new community gateway sign.

- Hill Street: Resurface the road to reduce and manage rainwater and sediment runoff; install permeable pavement and bio-infiltration practices to reduce stormwater runoff; install new curbs; build intersection landscaping beds; improve crosswalks.

- Historic Schoolhouse Walkway: Repair or replace existing concrete sidewalk connecting downtown to the historic schoolhouse; halt erosion from hillside by planting native vegetation; install bio-infiltration swales; incorporate natural elements such as limestone blocks or pavers along the route.

- Shepherd Garden: Highlight the food tour concept by presenting innovative and community-based ideas for local food production and self-sufficiency to surrounding communities through education and action.

Steering Committee
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Marshall Hahn
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Ruth Hilgerson
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Harold Krambeer
Mary Kramer
Cletus Keppler
Tanya Keppler
Carol Keune
Larry Landsgard
Orlan Landsgard
Caroline Lenth
Allen Mitchell
Cindy Olson
Eileen Peterson
Beth Rentschler
Mary Sass
Phyllis Thurn
Helen Wagner
Elsie Walsh
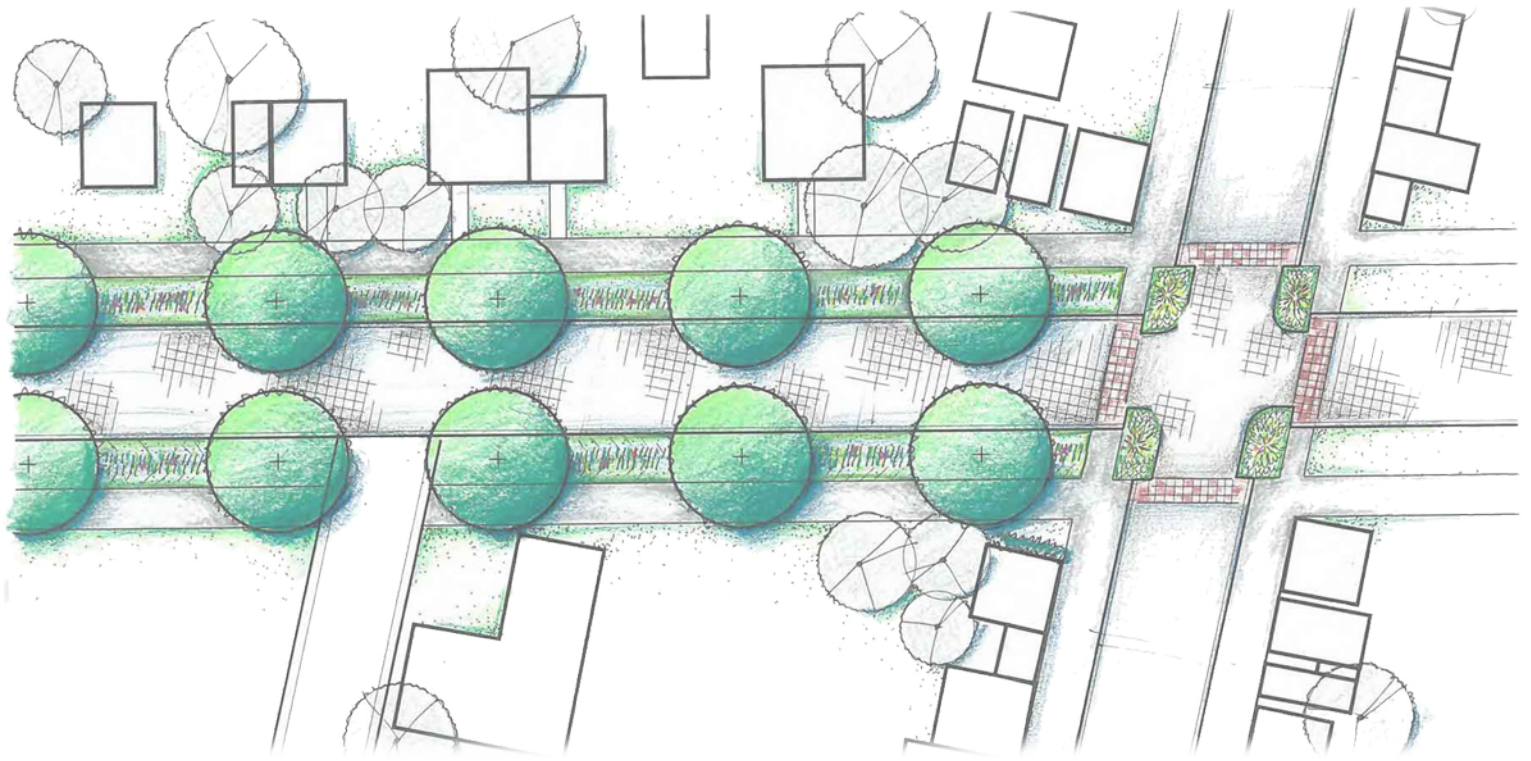*Kevin Walsh*
Lary Walter

Top: *Improvements to Hill Street include permeable concrete pavers and parkway gardens.*

Middle right: *These impervious areas along Hill Street will allow for better infiltration of rainwater runoff.*

Bottom right: *The planting beds of the Shepherd Garden will grow food to be distributed through The Shepherd of the Hills Food Pantry.*

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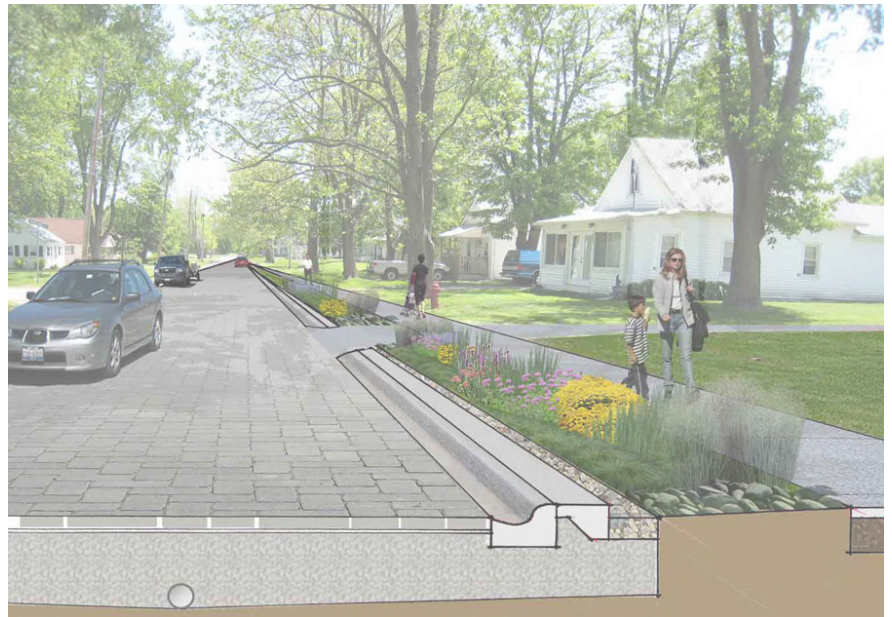
Top: *The sidewalk that currently connects downtown St. Olaf to the historic schoolhouse is in need of maintenance, repair or replacement.*

Bottom: *Bio-infiltration swales can be installed on either side of the sidewalk. This strategy, coupled with deep rooted herbaceous vegetation will greatly decrease the risk of erosion.*

Story City

Trees Forever Facilitator: Brad Riphagen
Landscape Architects: Brett Douglas, Grant Thompson
Intern: Lily-Love Toppar

Founded as Fairview in the 1850s by Scandinavian settlers looking for new land, Story City developed into a railroad town later in the nineteenth century. The town incorporated in 1881, only to find that another post office already had the name Fairview. The name was then changed to Story City in honor of US Supreme Court Associate Judge Joseph Story, who was well known for his eloquence and intelligence. As Story City grew, its population continued to be heavily Scandinavian, and that cultural heritage remains important today.

Story City is now a progressive community with a population of 3,228, located on Interstate 35 and only 10 miles north of Ames and Iowa State University. Situated along the Skunk River, the town provides a beautiful atmosphere and offers a variety of recreational activities, a beautiful downtown, and distinctive historic landmarks like the 1936 Swinging Bridge, the Story Theatre/Grand Opera House, and the 1913 Herschell-Spillman Antique Carousel, each of which add to the quality of life for residents and visitors.

The visual image of Story City is important to the community, as is the safety and economic vitality of the town. The steering committee stressed the need to develop a pedestrian-friendly route connecting the town to its western edge past the railroad tracks. The City recently completed a 3,350-foot section of bike/hiking trail through South Park and the Jacobson subdivision area and is preparing to build a new trail bridge in 2011. The area along the trail leading to the bridge and river crossing will need landscaping, and signage along the Skunk River Greenbelt could be improved. The Story City visioning committee built upon these initial priorities through the visioning process and decided on the following concepts:

- Signage: Develop a family of themed signage, including way-finding signage, entryway signage and park signage with possible locations in east, south, and west entrances to town, downtown, and North Park and South Park.

- Multipurpose Trail Connections: Create multipurpose trails to link to park systems, educational, and recreational facilities in the east and west areas of town.

- Pedestrian Friendliness and Safety: Create safer environments for pedestrians and motorists through the use of traffic calming mechanisms, especially on Pennsylvania Avenue and Broad Street.

- Downtown: Improve pedestrian safety; provide multipurpose trail connections and reduce vehicular conflicts in the downtown streetscape.

- Beautification: Improve the visual quality of Market Street and other areas through vegetative screening and ornamental fencing.

- North Park: Employ multiple stabilization mechanisms on the banks of the Skunk River in North Park to minimize erosion; improve or replace old equipment in the parks.

VELKOMMEN

Top left: *Broad Street is a great opportunity for entrance signage for people to view when entering town from the interstate.*

Middle left: *The proposed entrance sign communicates that a driver is entering Story City and screens some commercial properties.*
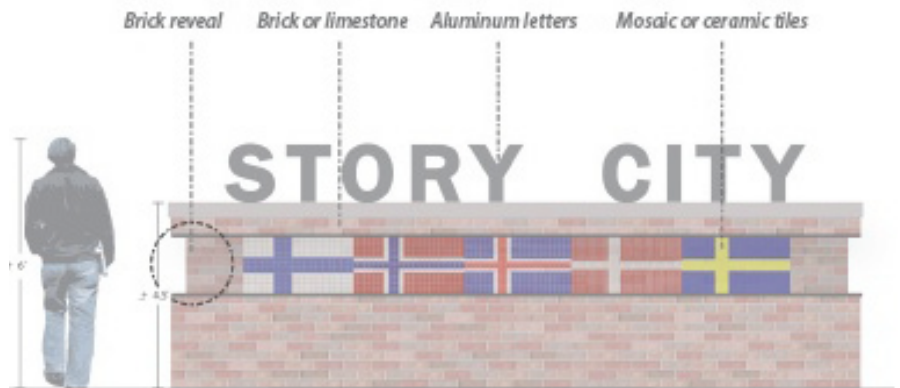
Bottom: *Having bumpouts along the downtown portion of Broad Street will slow traffic and allow space for street tree plantings and pedestrian seating.*

Top right: *Way-finding signs can be located throughout the city to direct visitors and residents to various destinations.*

Middle right: *Once a person has arrived to a destination such as North Park, he can be lead to other amenities.*

Bottom right: *The proposed entrance signage draws people further into Story City and tells a story about the city's Scandinavian heritage.*

Reflective paint on aluminum

± 15'

CITY HALL →
HOSPITAL →
PARK ↑

Aluminum letters   Portland cement concrete   Painted Aluminum

NORTH PARK
POOL
CAROUSEL
S-TABLE

NORTH PARK
POOL
CAROUSEL
S-TABLE

NORTH PARK
POOL
CAROUSEL
S-TABLE

Brick reveal   Brick or limestone   Aluminum letters   Mosaic or ceramic tiles

STORY CITY
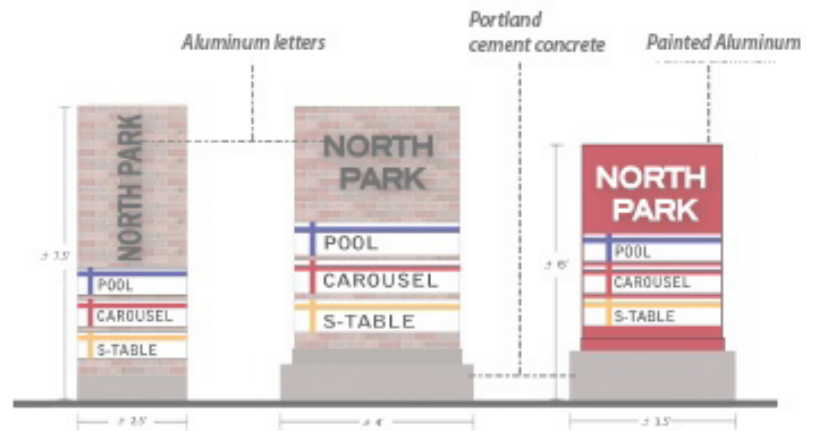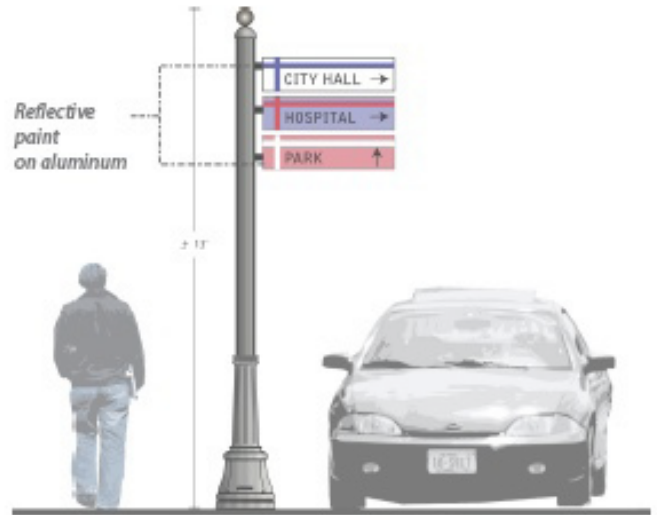
Walford

Trees Forever Facilitator: Karen Brook, Emily Swihart
Landscape Architect: Loren Hoffman
Intern: Nate Weitl

The city of Walford, home to 1,224 residents, is located in Benton County, 13 miles southwest of Cedar Rapids. Walford is a friendly bedroom community for Cedar Rapids and Iowa City's metropolitan areas, as well as the gateway community to the Amana Colonies. The local transportation system consists of roadways, sidewalks and the CRANDIC railway. The safety, accessibility, and visual aesthetics of these networks are important to the viability of the community. The city's main street is US 151, which is flooded with traffic at all hours. The way in which the highway divides the town also poses safety concerns. Presently there is no safe and accessible system allowing pedestrian access to both sides of the city and no sidewalks along any of the streets that cross US 151.

Walford's needs for its transportation system are growing, and the visioning program design team focused on developing concepts that addressed the needs of future expansion while maintaining the character of the community. Through the visioning program, the steering committee built on its initial priorities and decided on the following concepts:

- Community Entrance Signage: Properly scale the sign to improve visibility; incorporate a community identity into the design; create opportunities for nighttime lighting effects; provide a planting bed around sign base; use an effective planting scheme to enhance and frame views of sign; plant native prairie in roadway ditch.

- Community Identity and Way-finding Signage: Create community logo that is unique, adaptable, timeless, scalable, gimmick-free, and simple in color scheme; install way-finding signage that includes city logo, legible font, and simple color scheme; add nighttime lighting.

- Highway 151 Corridor: Use a curb-and-gutter cross section to build a sense of enclosure and force motorists to slow down; install storm sewer to drain curb-and-gutter street; line the corridor with small ornamental trees, larger street trees, and shorter plantings; unify the corridor with theme lighting throughout city limits; construct a multiuse trail on north side of highway; provide space for bike traffic, either with on-street bike lanes or on separate trail.

- Highway 151 and Linn-Benton Road Intersection: Slow traffic with raised medians and curb-and-gutter cross section, street lighting, trees, and sculptural elements; redevelop post office parcel; vacate 2nd Street right-of-way between C Avenue and Highway 151; restrict access to highway from private properties; rework intersection by realigning streets or creating a roundabout; define this intersection as a major gateway with aesthetic enhancements; use elements, such as paving design and site furniture, that supplement community branding efforts.

- Highway 151 and 1st Avenue: Remove 1st Avenue access to the highway; restrict 1st Avenue railroad crossing to pedestrians only; incorporate raised median and traffic-calming elements in keeping with other Highway 151 corridor improvements; restore and relocate old caboose.

- Trail Network: Build consensus on planned trail route to focus community efforts; use concept trail map as a planning tool as new roadways are built or existing roadways improved; establish sidewalks along trail route; create safe crossings of Highway 151; plan for regional trail connections to Amana and Fairfax, and work with those communities to coordinate efforts.

- Landscape Beautification: Use landscape screening to create appealing backdrops for entry signage; coordinate themed gateway plantings; consider safety issues such as clear zones, snow drifting and sight lines; incorporate native prairie through much of roadside ditches.

- Stormwater Management: Educate public about benefits of rain gardens and native plant materials; encourage landowners to install rain gardens near trails and plantings in town.

Top: Placing this historic caboose at the south entrance to town will give the community a landmark and a sense of identity.

Middle: Industrial buildings and trucks line the north side of Highway 151 on the north end of town.

Bottom: Incorporating plantings along this corridor will provide a better impression of what Walford is for visitors.

**Top:** *Multiple access points to Highway 151 and the lack of pedestrian crossings make this area confusing and dangerous.*

Middle:*The realignment of Linn-Benton Road will allow for an intersection that is much easier for both vehicles and pedestrians.*

Bottom: *This sign integrates rusted metal and naturally cut limestone in order to designate the entrance to Walford through the use of local materials.*
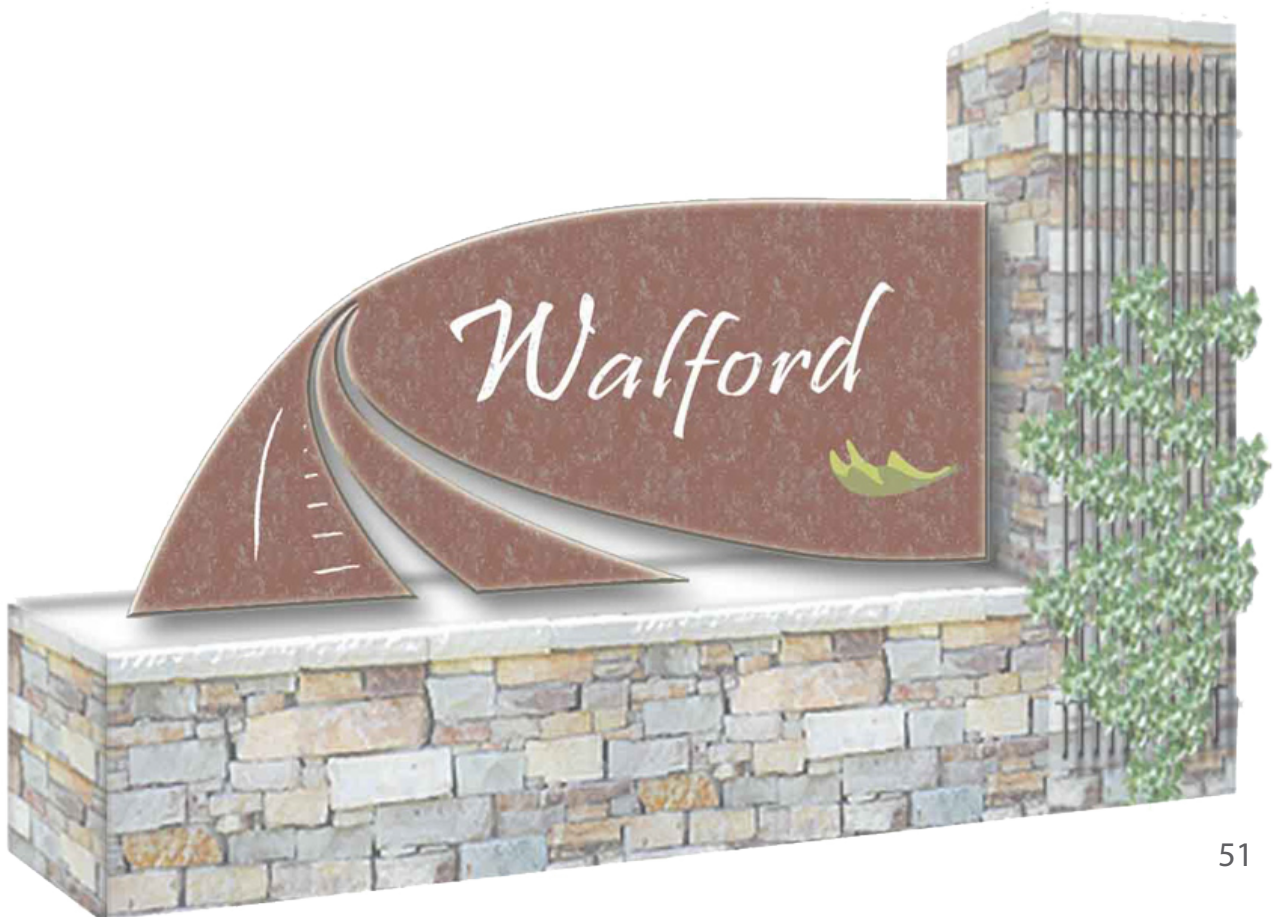
West Liberty

Trees Forever Facilitator: Roger Hunt
Landscape Architect: Meg Flenker
Intern: Barry Bode

Located five miles south of Interstate 80, West Liberty is a friendly town in eastern Iowa just minutes from larger metropolitan areas such as the Quad Cities. West Liberty offers its 3,635 residents several reminders of its history, including brick streets, a Carnegie Library, and the 1897 Rock Island depot. The community grew up around the railroad industry and flourished as the railroad developed. It has continued to prosper and renovate its historic treasures in preparation for the future. Today, West Liberty is home to the West Liberty Raceway, the county fairgrounds, several recreational parks, and West Liberty Foods.

The Community Visioning Program focused on West Liberty's streets, sidewalks and trails. There is a need for surface improvements to city streets and sidewalks. Uneven and broken sidewalks pose safety concerns. Trail improvement and expansion is also a priority. The city also feels the absence of safe trails not only hinders the promotion of healthy recreation but detracts from residents' overall quality of life.

Additional signage would also add to the overall vision of the town. There are five entrances to the community that could benefit from welcoming signage. Currently, West Liberty is a town that people drive through. The community would like to develop a visually pleasing, walkable community that welcomes motorists and encourages them to stop.

Through the 2010 visioning process, the West Liberty steering committee built upon its vision and identified a number of priority areas that will help them accomplish their task:

- Highway 6 Corridor: Relocate utility lines to provide better access for farm equipment; add decorative lighting that matches the style used downtown; construct a continuous sidewalk system; add decorative pavement matching the brick used downtown; improve accessibility of public walks; integrate way-finding system; add decorative pavement to highlight the start and end of the downtown corridor; install brick-patterned pavement to highlight pedestrian crossings.

- Community Entryways: Install new entryway sign that integrates with community identity and way-finding system; incorporate lighting, landscaping and mowed edge around the formally landscaped area; plant native grasses and forbs in the roadway ditches.

- Recreational Trail: Provide a looped trail system that offers both long and short routes; incorporate trailheads at different locations along the trail; link important community areas such as downtown, schools, depot area and community parks, providing connections to residential areas, including outlying rural housing developments; allow for future connections to a regional trail system that is reflected in regional trail master plans.

- Downtown Alley: Install permeable paving that looks similar to the brick used downtown and reduces stormwater runoff; replace alley wall; install trash receptacle pads, planting beds and privacy fences; use decorative globe lighting to match that used in the city's pocket parks.

Steering Committee
Karen Lathrop, chair
Randy Carlson
Dave Dvorak
Ruben Galvan
Carl Gillman
Bill Koellner
Tonia Franklin
Virginia Miehe
Joe Parrish
Chad Thomas
Letha Ottoway
Chris Ward
Lyle Zimmerman

- Ron-de-voo Park: Define vendor area with decorative pavement pattern bordered by new planting beds with low-growing species; use bollard lighting to maintain private ambience; paint mural of West Liberty's history on west side of the Strand Theater.

- Depot Park: Establish a rain garden in the existing drainage swale; build a pedestrian bridge in the style of a truss bridge over the swale; create a new sign and planting bed to identify depot building; link existing trail to downtown via adjacent Railroad Park, with depot serving as trailhead; enhance existing trail with way-finding signage, seating areas, bicycle parking, and trees of varying heights.

- Screening and Directing Views: Install way-finding signs and themed planting beds on Maxson Avenue; incorporate solid wood screen fencing and landscaping on 3rd Street; extend the decorative pavement and lighting from the downtown area; emphasize the corridor between downtown and the fairground entrance with landscaping, continuous sidewalks, and continuance of the decorative lighting and pavement in the crosswalks.

Top: *Enhancements in this area include bermed planting beds with a mowing edge, wayfinding signage, and a continuous sidewalk along Maxson Avenue.*

Left: *Transforming the swale that currently exists in this space into a rain garden and using a pedestrian bridge that resembles a railroad truss bridge creates an appropriate access point to this historic site.*

Top: *This grassy area north of Ron-de-voo Park serves as a gathering space for vendors during celebrations.*

Bottom: *Using decorative paving and low-growing species in new planting beds defines the area for vendors.*
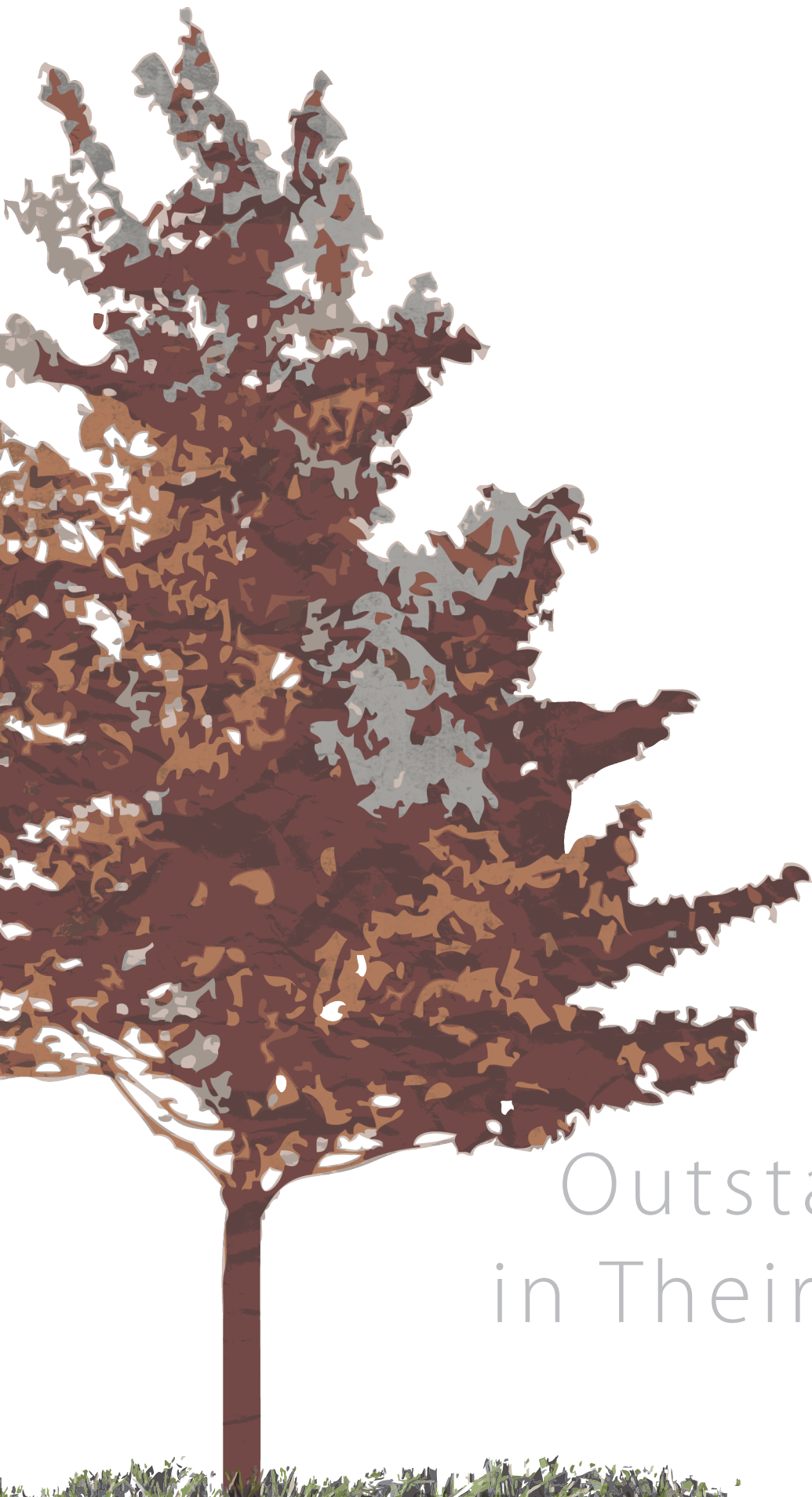
Outstanding
in Their Fields

Chris Seeger

What do healthy communities, landscape design, geospatial technology and smart phones all have in common? Everything, according to Chris Seeger, ISU Extension landscape architect and associate professor.

Since coming to ISU as a graduate student, Chris' professional interests have focused on giving people a voice. However, his definition of *voice* isn't confined to simply the spoken word. Rather, Chris engages the public using state-of-the-art, web-based technology.

Chris grew up rural North Dakota, in small town of Turtle Lake. Although he didn't grow up on a farm, he was involved with agriculture because his father was a large animal veterinarian. While in high school, he became interested in landscaping through Future Farmers of America (FFA), even winning the state award for proficiency in landscape design, as well as for small business management.

Chris credits his father for familiarizing him and his sister with computer technology. "My dad adopted computers very early in his practice, especially database stuff," he said. "He was writing a lot of code for a nutrition program that he built for cow-calf operations.... When he was doing that, I was starting to play around, learning basic programming."

While growing up, Chris had a dichotomy of interests: at the same time he was learning basic computer programming, he was hunting, fishing, bird-watching and learning plant species. These varied interests would serve him well as he

Chris critiques the work of an undergraduate student as part of his job as a teaching assistant.

progressed through undergraduate school, graduate school, and finally teaching and outreach.

Chris initially enrolled at North Dakota State to study electrical engineering with a focus on biomedical engineering, a field that he is still fascinated with to this day. However, by the end of the first quarter, he was ready for something different. "One day I walked into the architecture building, which happened to be right across the street [from engineering], and I saw landscape architecture. I thought, 'wow, you can actually make a profession out of what I did in high school,' because I hadn't really heard of it," he said.

Chris vividly remembers the day he changed majors, when he went to Professor Ewert in engineering for a signature. Ewert said, "OK, if you want to go work in a profession where you work long hours and really don't make any money." Chris looked at him and said, "Yeah, but at least I'll be happy."

He graduated in 1995 with a Bachelor of Science in landscape architecture and environmental design. "It was a rigorous program, because we also studied environmental design," he said. "If you were doing the five-year landscape architecture program, you ended up with a double major."

Something that few people know about Chris is that the focus of his environmental design degree was on range management and land reclamation. "I spent time learning the science of moving cows from one pasture to another," he said. "I fully expected upon graduating that I would probably get a job with the BLM [Bureau of Land Management] or go to work for one of the power companies that was doing coal mining and work on land reclamation."

His career trajectory changed during his fifth year of college, when he was asked to be a student instructor for the freshman landscape architecture studio. "I realized I liked teaching, so I started applying to graduate schools. Iowa State was on the list because my dad was an alum."

His list of schools became shorter when he started to explore geographic information systems (GIS) and web-based technologies, and he chose ISU after

finding several articles on GIS by Paul Anderson, ISU professor of landscape architecture. As a teaching assistant for Anderson, Chris taught a lot of digital design courses, further honing his technology and teaching skills.

Chris earned a Master of Landscape Architecture in 1997. His thesis topic involved a web-based mapping system to map historic photographs of Shenandoah National Park in Virginia—a topic that is taken for granted with the evolution of programs such as Google Earth and Picassa.

Chris became involved with the Community Visioning Program while still a graduate student. He started out by helping improve the way that transportation enhancement concepts were communicated to the client communities. Using digital design techniques to edit images, Chris and the student interns were able to give visioning steering committees a better idea of what finished projects looked like. In turn, the committees could use the images to promote the concept to the public, as well as to potential funding sources.

At that time, the program ran year-round, which meant Chris and the interns had to change barren, snowy community images into vibrant, green landscapes. "We had to create the image edits of trees from scratch," Chris said. "[Intern] Tammy Billerbeck and I did so many communities; we had a really good staff."

Chris maintained a relationship with the visioning program after he became as a full-time faculty member and the Extension landscape architect, and has provided invaluable insight into engaging the public through technology.

In 2005, the visioning program mailed transportation surveys to random samples from each community participating in the program that year. Part of the survey involved drawing commuting and recreation routes on a map. Using GIS, Chris assisted in digitizing the routes of all the respondents and overlaying them on aerial photos. However, this process was quite labor intensive. In 2008, he digitized the survey, allowing survey participants to "draw" their commuting and recreation routes with a mouse directly onto an

In the early days of Community Visioning, the program ran year-round and interns were often required to transform an image from a winter scene (top) to a summer scene (middle). Chris worked on this edit of Orange City's entrance sign, which eventually was built (bottom).

aerial photo using Google Maps. The online survey data could be analyzed much easier and faster, and frequency of use was added to the route maps.

In 2010, Chris digitized the community visioning process visual quality assessment. This assessment had been done using photographs and paper maps; participants took photos of the positive and negative views of their community and mapped the locations on an aerial map. Overlays of the maps illustrated
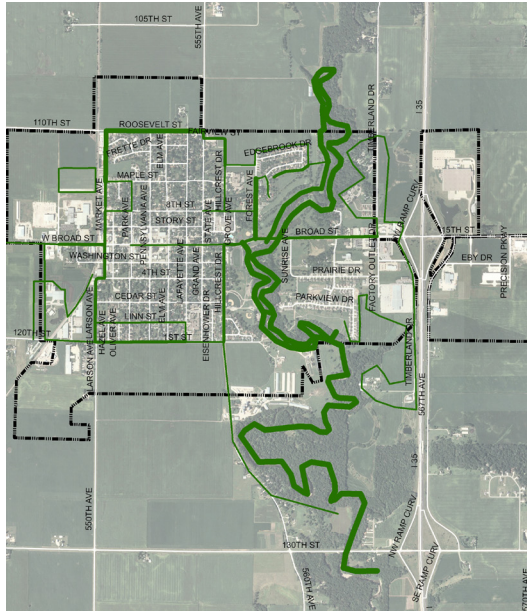
Desired Trail Routes (31 respondents)

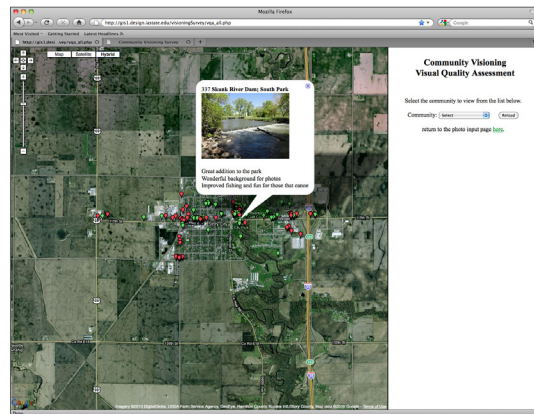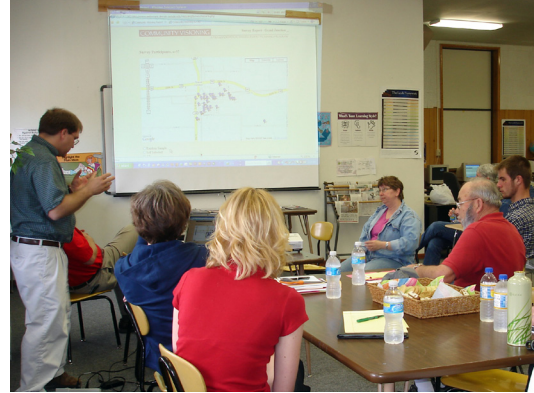1 user   2   3–5   6–10 users

This map shows desired trail routes identified by Story County survey participants.

Top: Chris presents online survey results during a meeting of the Grand Junction visioning committee (2008). *Bottom:* This screenshot shows an aerial photo of Story City with positive and negative views mapped. Users can click on the points to view accompanying photos.

patterns that emerged. This year, participants took digital photos, which were uploaded to a website and displayed on a digital map. Residents were able to view the results live during the design workshops.

In addition to community visioning, Chris has worked many projects related to public involvement, ranging from transportation enhancement planning for Interstate 80 to safe routes to school to creating healthy communities through the built environment.

"My interest has always been in geospatial design and public participation in that process," he said. "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."

Chris does more than use the technology available. He designs his own tools to meet the needs of his research, such as the Visual and Spatial Survey (VASS) builder, which not only allows participants to input data, but posts the collective data publicly,

allowing participants to view and manipulate the information. Critics of this type of process argue that too much public input will keep a project from moving forward, but Chris disagrees. "I don't know if that's really true. You just pick a date and decide that it's done and move on to the next step. In terms of design, you can make a 3D landscape, and people can look at it and comment on it. It's a lot cheaper to do that than to have built something and then get comments back."

In 2000, he and his wife Kersten formed a consulting business, Land Viz•Media, LLC, that focuses on online mapping and data representation. One of their projects, with Jones and Jones Landscape Architects, was to develop a green infrastructure plan. They used online digital mapping as part of the design workshop, so that people who could not attend could still contribute. That project, for Lake Forest Park,

Washington, won the 2008 Iowa ASLA Award of Excellence. In addition to VASS, Chris is coauthor of the CD version of Nature's Heartland and the PlantPro database software, which he hopes to make available for the iPad when he has free time.

A major component of Chris' work involves the Safe Routes to School program. He has worked with both the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Iowa Department of Public Health. This coming spring and fall, he will be doing walkability assessments in 12 communities. The desired result is a comprehensive walk to school education program for the state. "We're hoping it's a program we can keep expanding to encompass more healthy community design issues," Chris said.

In a similar vein, Chris and Greg Welk, ISU associate professor of kinesiology, are exploring how to use technology and social media to promote physical activity, and how to document that change. Chris compares their idea with the use of social media in the 2008 presidential election. "I've been throwing out this phrase, 'Why not Iowa?' What I'm referring to is why can't Iowa be the first state to really make a change in the obesity trend? Why can't we figure out and implement a plan that starts to change society?" he explained.

Chris plays an integral role in ISU Extension's Geospatial Technology Training Program, which offers short courses on GIS designed for community planners and local officials who use GIS software. Along with teaching workshops, he has codesigned
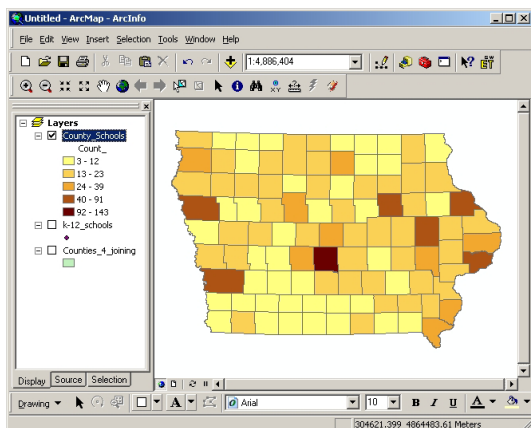
His position as an Extension specialist allows Chris to share his knowledge of GIS outside the college classroom to students of all ages.

15 of the course tutorials and more than 30 two-page task sheets. He also teaches introductory GIS and analytical planning GIS to college students. He teaches both of these classes online, attracting students from all over the country and drawing record enrollment. "We had [class] projects dealing with stuff in Arizona, North Carolina, Florida, Minnesota, California... There were some really neat senior projects."

Not surprisingly, Chris and Kersten met because Chris replied to the wrong person on an e-mail list. That person happened to be Kersten's college roommate, who eventually introduced them. They got married in 1997 and have two sons, Linden (age 7) and Sage (age 4). they enjoy traveling and spending time outdoors as a family. Chris, a former Eagle Scout, is re-entering the world of scouting as his sons start Cub Scouts. Since scouting includes a merit badge for landscape architecture, he is thankful that he swtiched to that during college instead of sticking with biomedical engineering. And naturally, Chris enjoys tinkering with things and seeing how they work.

Chris has been selected to receive the Community Visioning Program achievement award to recognize his many contributions to the program, particularly in terms of digital design and geospatial technology. Chris has dedicated his career to serving the public, whether it be through teaching, extension and outreach, or funded research involving community participation.

Chris wrote the Table Joining GIS tutorial, which teaches users to spatially join data by its geographic location, as shown in this map view of data.

Roger Hunt

For 20 years, Trees Forever has been sharing how to care for natural areas, listening to the needs of Iowa's communities, and empowering them to learn how to connect with their environment and promote stewardship. Landscape Architect Roger Hunt has been a part of that mission for nearly all of those years.

Roger is also a farmer, and has raised Black Angus cattle, created on-farm conservation areas, and raised a crop of children—one daughter and three sons. His farm is living proof that a healthy environment and agriculture can coexist.

A love of the outdoors was instilled in Roger when he was a young boy, growing up on a farm near Greeley, Iowa. "One thing that influenced me as a young person was ... just being a farm boy, all the way through, from animals to crops, and we had a little timber on our farm that I dearly loved," he said.

Despite his background, neither farming nor landscape architecture was Roger's first career choice. He recalls a day during his senior year in high school, when the teacher asked the class what they were going to do when they graduated, and one of his classmates said he was going to Iowa State University to study landscape architecture.

Despite his busy schedule, Roger still finds time for riding his Harley, his favorite summer pastime.

"I can remember just as clearly today as that day," Roger said. "I remembered laughing to myself and thinking, 'Why does anybody need to go to college to learn how to plant flowers?'" However, by the end of his first year at ISU, Roger had enrolled in the landscape architecture program. "I thought, 'This is great!'" he said. "It fits me so well, because it dealt with nature, it dealt with design, and it worked with the outdoor environment and it worked people into the outdoor environment in a nice, harmonious way."

Roger met his wife Marianne at Iowa State in much the same way that he connected with landscape architecture: completely by chance, on a blind date he almost didn't go on. After dating about a year and a half, the two married, and when Roger graduated, they moved to Minnesota, where he had taken a job with the state highway department designing interstate rest areas and information centers. Their daughter Lisa was born in Minnesota.

Two years later, Roger took his second job in Seattle for Richard Corothers Associates. During this time, Marianne's father made them an offer to take over the family farm, but they declined, wanting to give Seattle a chance. Roger's job at Richard Corothers ended after two and half years, when a depression hit Seattle. He then took a job for the City of Redmond, Washington, designing parks, where he worked until he returned to Iowa. Roger and Marianne's son Matthew was born while they lived in Washington.

The value they place on family and their strong ties to the land are what brought Roger and his family back to Iowa. "Both Marianne and I grew up on the farm and both of us grew up with really strong family ties, family reunions, cousins, aunts, and uncles," he said. "We had our second child in Seattle. Our kids didn't know what an aunt and uncle or grandma and grandpa were."

At the same time, Roger had the opportunity to get his hands dirty. The City of Redmond received an 80-acre farm as a donation, which was to be used for growing trees for the town's parks. Roger got the tractor that was donated along with the farm running and started plowing.

"When I was plowing that ground the smell was so strong—the beautiful smell of the earth—it was so fragrant that it brought back tons of memories of growing up on the farm and of family," he said.

So with little money and possessions, they returned to Iowa to run the family farm, located near Columbus Junction. To make ends meet, both Roger and Marianne had to work off the farm, and Roger held a number of jobs before finding a home at Trees Forever.

"I didn't want to give up farming because I had made the commitment to take over the family farm. It's been in the family since 1842. It's about 168 years this year and every generation has farmed it, actually tilled the ground."

After working in several positions, in 1991, Roger saw an ad for a landscape architect and field coordinator for Trees Forever, and has been there ever since. "I never had an idea that I'd be there that long—five years was sort of a magical number for me—but I've really enjoyed the work. I've enjoyed the people that I work with. It's been a really good fit for me," he said.

Trees Forever suits Roger because he continues to be involved with landscape architecture and has the opportunity to work with small rural communities and rural landscapes. He appreciates the opportunities that Trees Forever has given 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 program started and has been a field coordinator since the it began in 1996.

The appeal of the visioning program for Roger is twofold. "One of my goals has always been to promote the profession of landscape architecture and site design with people in Iowa," Roger said. Early in his career at Trees Forever, he created a book, *Community Green Scenes: Designing Projects with an Ecosystem Perspective*, to help Iowans understand landscape architecture and the value of planning. "I contacted a lot of my friends in landscape architecture in the state of
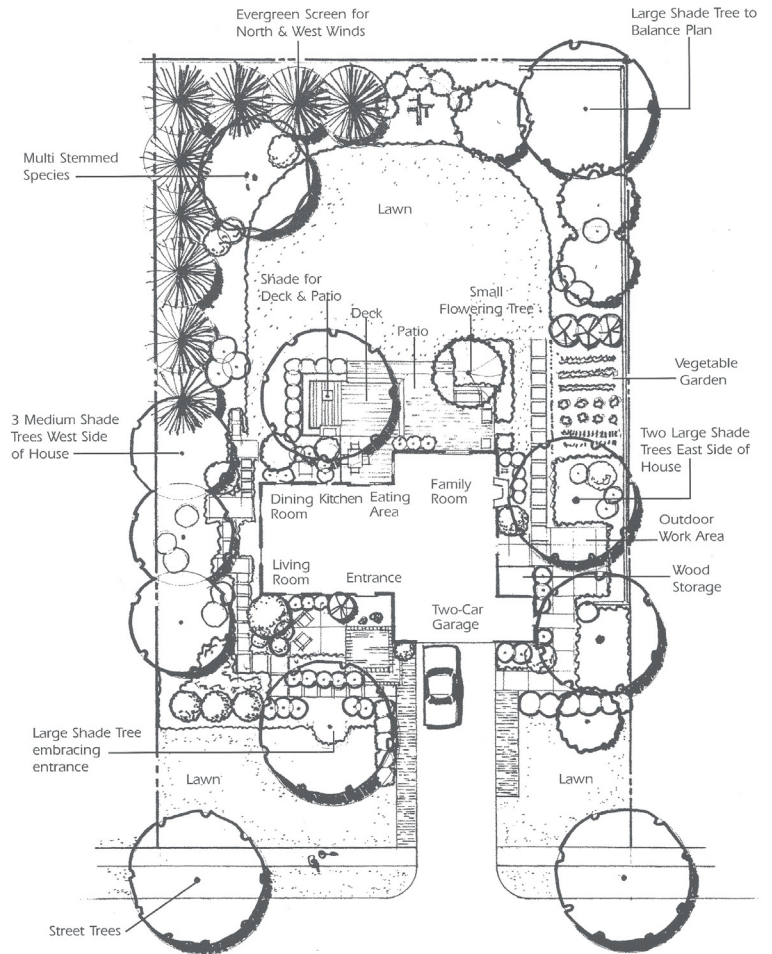
This rendering of a residential lot is one of several of Roger's design contributions to Community Green Scenes.
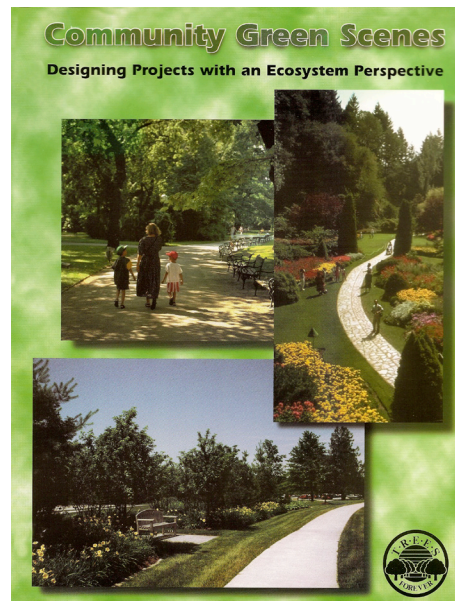
Roger put together Community Green Scenes *to educate Iowans about the value of landscape architecture.*

As a grandfather of four, Roger takes pleasure in facilitating children's focus groups for community visioning (West Liberty, 2010).

Iowa and got samples of their work, and I put it together in a booklet." In this way, he was able to promote landscape architecture as the profession that can design green spaces for communities, as well as showcase the work of his colleagues. Roger's second goal is to help rural communities. "It's always been important to me to help these little towns out," he said. "That's why I keep coming back to visioning, because I see how much they appreciate [the program]." He believes the visioning program is a valuable collaboration. "I like working with the landscape architects and interns. I love working with the communities. Seeing them get excited about their town, seeing them get some vision for it."

He has found it interesting to watch the program evolve over the years and to see how well it has been accepted. He believe that visioning has had a big impact on the state, for small communities but also for landscape architecture and the many students who have benefitted from the internship.

In addition to community visioning, Roger has worked on a variety of projects with Trees Forever. He enjoyed the watershed projects that he has worked on, such as Beaver Creek in Johnston and Fenchell Creek near Strawberry Point.

The top photo shows an existing feedlot, while the bottom photo shows the feedlot with proposed enhancements to protect the stream flowing near the farm.

With his experience with agriculture, Roger was able to design viable solutions that would protect the watersheds without jeopardizing the livelihoods of the local farmers.

"Another thing I really like doing and think we need to do more of is working with schools,— help the schools to see how the whole campus is an educational opportunity," he said. "A couple years ago I did Shellsburg School. That's one of my favorite projects too," he added.

Currently, Roger is part of a team working on Community Trails Visioning in Fairfield. This program is modeled after visioning, but focuses strictly on trails. "We are trying to help them see opportunities along the trail to make it more fun and more educational, and that's been a really interesting, fun project," Roger said.

The team is working on the Highway 34 bypass area in Fairfield, which consists primarily of agricultural areas. "We'll be doing some things

This aerial photo illustrates the preliminary trail plan for Fairfield.

The concept plan for a rest stop along the trail includes a shaded seating area and ornamental trees.

out there to help interpret what's going on from an agricultural standpoint, but then we're also doing nature interpretation, trailheads, and rest areas along the trail."

In reflecting on his career, Roger recognizes that it has not been at all what he planned. "My plan was to have an office of my own someday and just be a traditional landscape architect, but I wouldn't change a thing looking back on it. It's such a varied experience."

On the farm, which is named Suntree Farm, Roger's primary enterprise is raising purebred Black Angus cattle. He also raises corn, soybeans, oats, hay and pasture. When Roger was farming full time, he and his family raised hogs, sheep, cattle, and chickens.

Roger related how they came to name the farm Suntree Farm: "When the sun came up in the morning, it came up over the trees on Indian Creek, and there'd be a foggy mist in the low lying areas and this beautiful sun rising over the trees. Then ... in the fall, we had a group of old oak trees around our house, and the sun would set behind those oak trees. You'd have the big dark trunks and the bright orange sun behind the trees, so Suntree was almost automatic. It just seemed to fit.

With his job at Trees Forever and the farm, Roger doesn't have much free time. Her refers to farming as his "spare-time work," because activities associated with cattle consume a lot

of his time. When he does have time, he likes to spend it with his four grandchildren, all of whom live within three miles of the farm. He also enjoys riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle during the summer. He also takes pictures. "I used to hunt but I don't anymore," he said. "I just hunt with my camera."

Roger has been selected to receive the Community Visioning Program achievement award to recognize his many years of service to both program and to Trees Forever. Roger's life hard work and perseverance, as well as his devotion to family and to the land, is a perfect example of the strong ethics and values for which Midwesterners are known.

Suntree Farm, located near the town of Columbus Junction, has been in the family since 1842.
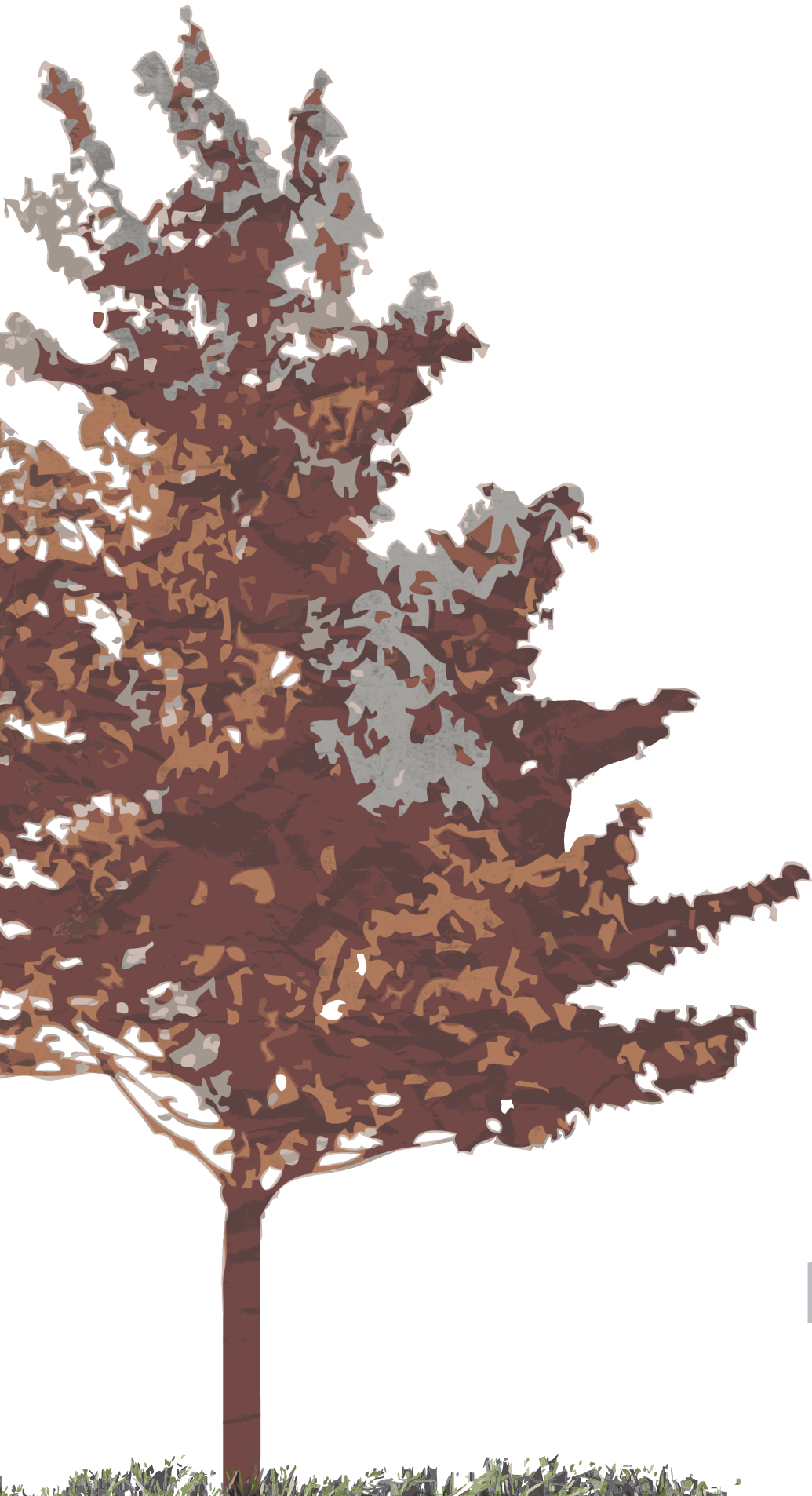
People

Interns

Martyn Albert

Martyn grew up in Davenport. When not playing soccer and baseball, he enjoyed camping, fishing and hunting with his family, which instilled in him a passion for the outdoors and inspired his love for plants and the environment. Growing up in a city near a developing riverfront also gave Martyn a passion for urban systems and culture that he still studies today. He graduated from high school in 2002 and earned a two-year junior college degree focusing on creative writing and environmental studies before transferring to ISU's landscape architecture program, from which he graduated in May 2010. Martyn's positive intern experience with the visioning program in 2008 brought him back to the program in 2010. He believes that Iowa's small towns contribute to its rich cultural history and geography and may inspire landscape architecture practice methods and designs outside of the Community Visioning Program. Martyn worked with the communities of Clarksville, Rockford, Gunder, and St. Olaf.

Eric Doll

Born and raised in Des Moines, Eric came to ISU to develop his drawing skills. He majored in landscape architecture because he loves the outdoors and everything plants offer. Eric is well equipped with knowledge about plants and desires to learn more, so he recently added horticulture as a second major. Eric loves to sketch and watercolor, especially outdoor scenery, and he recently picked up marker rendering. He enjoys spending his time outdoors, playing disc golf, mountain biking, climbing trees, unicycling, juggling, and going on plant walks. Returning to the visioning program for the second time as an intern, Eric plans on gaining much more experience working in an office setting. He feels working at Conservation Design Forum is a supreme opportunity to broaden his knowledge on new conservation practices. Eric worked with the communities of Clarksville, Rockford, Gunder and St. Olaf.

Chris Riggert

Chris is a student at ISU entering his third year in the landscape architecture program in the fall 2010. He is from Louisville, Kentucky, and came to ISU to study at the College of Design. Originally intending to pursue community and regional planning, he switched to landscape architecture after becoming interested in designing places and experiences. Chris is interested in urban settings and the communities within. He hopes to work with communities to stimulate positive change, specifically in terms of transportation and sustainable practices. Community Visioning provides interns many opportunities, and Chris is excited to interact with community members and help them improve their town. He is also excited about working in an office setting and gaining insight from the professionals at Conservation Design Forum. Through real-world experience he will improve his skills in every facet of the design process. Chris worked with the communities of Clarksville, Rockford, Gunder and St. Olaf.

Nate Weitl

Nate earned his BLA in May 2010 from ISU. His study at ISU provided him with basic knowledge of landscape architecture, but there was much to learn in the professional world. Nate's interest in the profession grew out of a desire to design residential landscapes and his enjoyment of the outdoors, but he was pleasantly surprised at the diversity and complexity of landscape architecture. His future plans consist of exploring possible routes to full-time employment while settling down with his wife, Erin. While interested in the artistry of landscape architecture, Nate is happiest when dealing with people. He grew up on a farm three miles outside of Templeton, Iowa, population 350. This background instilled important values in him that directly relate to the visioning program, and he hopes to see his hometown benefit from the program in the future. Nate worked with the community of Walford.

Barry Bode

Barry is a 2010 graduate of ISU with a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture. His five years of experience gave him a broad skill set involving work with conservation, urban, residential, and community design. The last project Barry was involved with as a student focused on improving Des Moines' first ward. His proposal re-envisioned the vacant lots in the first ward to strengthen the community through urban hiking and community cropping concepts. This is Barry's first year working with the visioning program. He is excited to work with West Liberty and enjoys meeting new individuals and hearing their stories, thoughts and ideas. Growing up in Osage, Iowa, he understands how important small towns are to the state of Iowa and to the lives of residents. Through the process of analysis and meetings he has learned about West Liberty and challenged himself to fulfill the expectations set by the community to make West Liberty a beautiful place.

Brandon Losey

While growing up in the Chicago suburbs, Brandon was always immersed in his natural surroundings. Whether it was playing in the prairie down the street, visiting the local conservation areas and parks, or going on family trips to the Chicago Botanic Garden and various national parks throughout the country—Brandon was often outside. His parents are also avid gardeners and encouraged his love for plants and the aesthetics of good design. Brandon is a designer/creator, and finds it hard to sleep at night unless he accomplishes or makes something creative in a day's work. This creative mentality fostered a passion for landscape architecture, which has been furthered and nurtured through the landscape architecture program at ISU. After taking a community design studio in the fall 2009 and working with the community of Elkader, Iowa, Brandon wanted to extend this experience into a summer internship and the professional realm. After graduation in May 2010, Brandon was eager and excited to help Estherville make its goals a reality.

Allie Loecke

Allie will start her fifth year of the landscape architecture program at Iowa State University in the fall of 2010. Her great love of the outdoors and interest in design made her first three years exciting. In the summer of 2009, Allie studied abroad in Rome, Italy learning about the history, architecture and landscape of the city. The experience greatly added to her knowledge of landscape architecture. Allie is interested in Community Visioning because she hopes to pursue a career in community design. Her interest increased when she took a community design studio in the fall of 2009 and produced a riverfront park design for Elkader, IA. Working with the people of the communities is important to Allie and she enjoys creating designs built around community input. Beginning in February 2010, Allie led the focus group component of the Community Visioning Program's inventory process. During the summer she worked with Hudson and Independence.

Annie Remmerde

Annie grew up on her family farm just outside the city limits of the small community of Rock Valley, Iowa. It was there that her interest in the outdoors began. As a child, she spent her time exploring the fields and playing near the creek. Annie was accepted into the landscape architecture program at Iowa State University in the fall of 2009. She recently finished her second year in the College of Design and is excited to continue training to become a landscape architect. After growing up in a small Iowa town, she understands the importance of improving rural communities and she is thrilled to be a part of the 2010 Community Visioning design team. Annie understands that rural towns impact the rest of the nation, so she is excited to be able to use her training to make a positive difference in Hudson and Independence.

Bruce Niedermyer

Bruce just finished his fourth year in ISU's landscape architecture program. In summer 2008, he interned with the visioning program and worked with the town of Ely, in eastern Iowa. In summer 2009, Bruce studied abroad in Rome, and spent roughly two months studying the landscape and architecture of Europe. Bruce's interest in community visioning comes from many different facets of the program. He loves to meet community members, who contribute to the design, and he appreciates that the program gives people a voice in the process. He also believes that the experience that interns gain through working with landscape architects is beneficial to their future. His first experience with the program was extremely educational, and seizing the opportunity to participate once again was an easy decision. He also worked as a full-time intern with the visioning program since January 2010 and led the special places mapping component of the program's inventory process. During the summer he worked with the community of Knoxville.

John Simmons

John is entering his fifth year in ISU's landscape architecture program, with a second major in environmental studies and a minor in business. He has held several offices in the Student Society of Landscape Architects, including president and vice president. He studied abroad in Rome in 2009 and participated in a National Student Exchange at the University of Hawaii at Hilo in 2010. John grew up in a small town in southeast Iowa, much like many of the communities that participate in community visioning. He has a strong connection with the small town culture and wants to help that culture thrive. In his second summer as an intern, he looks forward to helping the community of Carson develop a vision that everyone can be proud of. His favorite part of visioning is guiding the steering committee through the design process and watching the excitement grow as their ideas unfold. What better place to live than small town Iowa!

Andrew Kraemer

Andrew earned his bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from ISU in May 2010. With a strong background in outdoor recreation and graphic design, Andrew uses this combined knowledge to challenge yesterday's use of spaces and redefine their functionality. Andrew focuses on designing spaces that enhance the user's sense of place and relationship to the area, while understanding today's technological necessities. In his spare time he enjoys running, reading, watching movies, and traveling around the country with friends and family. Being able to work directly with a community in the conceptual phase from start to finish is a unique opportunity that is not always available to young designers. Andrew enjoys the evolution of design, charrettes, and the active participation of a community, which allows for a design to develop a unique sense of identity that enhances both the community of Rolfe and its residents.

Lily-Love Toppar

Lily-Love, an international student, just completed her fourth year in ISU's landscape architecture program. Before attending ISU, she graduated from Achimota Secondary School and Allias Francais and earned a certificate in spoken languages in Ghana, Africa. Her hometown is Accra, the capital city of Ghana. She always had an interest in people relations and community design, so the idea of communicating with people and designing their homes—especially those damaged by natural forces—is most appealing to her. The prospect of working with a community is interesting to Lily-Love because she desires to work han -in hand with communities that wish for new havens or want to create or emphasize their identities. She is certain that helping these communities achieve their goals and working with landscape architects in a professional firm will further her future in the world of landscape architecture. She worked with Story City.

Partners

Many people contribute year after year to the success of the Community Visioning Program. Assistance comes from a variety of organizations, including state and federal government, education and private-sector groups. The professional landscape architecture firms, the local governments, organizations, and volunteers all play a critical role in carrying out the program.

Iowa State University

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David Yocca
Conservation Design Forum

Iowa Department of Transportation

Mark Masteller, Stuart Anderson, and Steve Holland have provided valuable insight in terms of Iowa DOT resources, methods, and project managment. They continue to promote Iowa's Living Roadways to their colleagues within the Iowa DOT, as well as other organizations.

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

Mark Masteller
Chief Landscape Architect, Iowa DOT

Steve Holland
Roadside Coordinator, Living Roadway Trust Fund, Iowa DOT

Federal Highway Administration

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