



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, December 04, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Council Chambers - 331 First Street East

AGENDA

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Workshops are not Public Hearings. No member of the public or interested party has the right to make a presentation or address the Council on an item under consideration in a workshop or a study session.

During the City Council Work Session, the Council will primarily discuss and debate items intended to be formally considered at a future City Council Meeting. However, the Council may at any noticed meeting, including a City Council Work Session meeting, take action on any item shown on the posted agenda as a potential action item. The City Council Work Session meeting is a regular meeting of the Independence City Council.

MEETING OPENING

Call the Meeting to Order

INDEPENDENCE PREMIUM FOODS

1. Members from IPF will be present to answer any questions the City Council has for the company.

COUNCIL TRAINING

2. Wilford Stone from Lynch Dallas will be present to discuss Council members' roles and responsibilities as well as where liability lies for them as they perform their functions as Council Members.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

3. Department Report – Airport Department
4. Department Report – Building Codes
5. Department Report – Streets
6. Department Report – Utilities

NEW BUSINESS

7. Nuisance Property Updates
8. Committee and Board Appointments
9. City Insurance RFP
10. Visioning Update
11. WWTP Project Financial Options
12. December 26, 2023, Council Meeting
13. 2024 Council Meeting Dates
14. City Manager Annual Evaluation
- 15.** Council Topics
- 16.** Mayor Topics

17. City Manager Topics

ADJOURNMENT

This agenda is subject to change.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager
FROM: Brett Soukup, Airport Manager
DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023
ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Airport Department

Fuel – Fuel Sales Update

- 100LL –1,021 gal.
- Jet A –1,015 gal.

Grounds:

- We have been moving dirt around different places on the airport to fill in different holes.

Equipment:

- We purchased running boards for the pickup truck. The truck sits up so much that I am worried that the seat will get worn out before it needs to be from sliding in and out.

Miscellaneous:

- The DNR came out to do a site visit for North Apron. This was to ensure that the contractor had the SWEEP and paperwork filled out for this project. We also discussed the SWWIP for the airport. This will outline all the places where spills will and can happen. We are supposed to have a book put together for this as well. I was able to find the old book that was put together in the early 90s. I just went ahead and started putting a new updated book together. When this gets done, we can apply for the new permit that we will need to renew yearly. This process is very lengthy, but I was able to do a good majority of the work. I sent this on to Bolton & Menk for review.
- The North apron is just about done, all that's left to do is painting and the fence around the outside. They came on November 21st to do the seeding just before the snow.
- All the utilities are fixed and working.
- I have been working on the revisions to the rules and regulations.
- We received a load of 100LL which was a little over 6,700 gallons.
- Traffic has been steady and in the last couple of weeks we have seen an increase in jet traffic and jet fuel sales.



City of Independence
City Council
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Department Report

Item #4.

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager
FROM: Todd Sherrets
DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023
SUBJECT: Department Report – Building Codes

As the days get shorter, and the weather is getting cooler, outside jobs have slowed down for the most part this season. There are still some larger jobs going on including the BCHC hospital expansion, P.A.W.S veterinary clinic, Emergency Management, and the Food pantry. There are several remodels/garages and other smaller jobs around town that are very active and will continue to inspect/monitor as needed.

We got our first glimpse of accumulated snow the other day. Roughly a dozen placards were tagged on properties that have been repeat violators over the years. As you can imagine most of these are all thawed out by now, but hopefully will encourage them to take care of their properties soon to avoid further placards or violations. As in most cases, the 5% of repeat violators take up 95% of the time. I'm hoping this will curtail some of the offenses and will allow more time in the field for other properties with more important issues to focus on.

We're still working on several larger Code-compliant cases here in the city with the assistance of our city attorney. Most of these are long overdue but do take some time to complete. A couple on the other hand have already been completed or close to completed with minimal effort after legal notice by the city attorney. This was after multiple attempts with minimal progress from myself.

Involvement with Habitat for Humanity continues to be a great relationship. Brainstorming ideas and coming up with plans to help citizens around town by utilizing monies that are already sitting in a place that Habitat has allotted. If you have any questions about applicable projects, or ideas or would like to volunteer, please go to webuildhabitat.org, or call/email Jeff Finke with Habitat for Humanity. jfinke@webuildhabitat.org

Still waiting on advice from Council on exactly how we want to go about the (TNR) trap/neuter/release program. With the colder months ahead, there will be less trapping as I don't like to keep them outside in the elements overnight. If there are locations where I can keep them safe and able to take them in, I will do so throughout the winter.

For any questions or concerns, please contact me at tsherrets@independenceia.org or 319-327-7652



City of Independence
City Council
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Department Report

Item #5.

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager
FROM: Brad Esch
DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023
SUBJECT: Department Report – Street Department

- Removed trees and brush in the ditch in front of Fareway and Dollar Fresh.
- Removed the infield top dressing from the complex baseball and softball fields and hauled them to other ballparks in town.
- Poured concrete with Parks and Rec. at 1st. Ward Park for the all-inclusive playground.
- Crack grinding/tar 2nd St. to Bland Blvd. Few other areas to keep up to date with the 5-year St. program.
- Fall leaf sweeping.
- Cold patch blacktopping.
- Working with Light and Power, tree trimming low hanging branches interfering in streets, sidewalks, and electric wires in the NE. Moving to the NW next.
- All things associated with Christmas: Tree, lights, wreath, garland. Set up for Jingle on Main.
- Placed salt contract order for the year. Mixed salt/sand. Serviced all plow trucks, plows, and sanders. Ready for this year's winter which we have already experienced.
- Everyday operations/Tree dump maintenance.



City of Independence
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Department Report

Item #6.

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager
FROM: Travis Foley
DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023
SUBJECT: Department Report – Utilities

Sewer Collection – Visu Sewer will be in town this month to work on our annual sewer cleaning in the northeast side of town.

Electric Pump completed the annual servicing on all the lift station pumps.

Water – Normal day-to-day activities.

Wastewater – Completed fall maintenance on equipment.

Continuing to work with Strand on the design of the new plant. They will be in town for a site visit on December 6th and 7th.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023

ITEM TITLE: Nuisance Property Updates

DISCUSSION:

Staff would like to discuss with the Council Nuisance Properties, specifically if the council wishes to continue issuing citations and Municipal Infractions or if they would be comfortable filing 657A actions through the City Attorneys office to begin the process of getting these properties under the City's control and ownership.

Should a property be taken under the 657A process, Staff would then work to remove the structures from the property that are dilapidated or unsafe, and then work to find a developer to purchase and build a home on the property. If that option is not available, then the property could be purchased by neighboring owners to expand their property.

The point of this activity is to get houses that are in bad shape removed so that they do not continue to drag down property values of neighboring homes and cause other issues for neighbors who maintain their properties as they should.

For reference, we have attached Chapter 657A of the Iowa Code.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

CHAPTER 657A

ABANDONED OR UNSAFE BUILDINGS — ABATEMENT BY REHABILITATION

Referred to in §6B.56, 446.7

Nuisances in general, chapter 657

657A.1	Definitions.	657A.7	Priority of receiver's mortgage.
657A.1A	Preliminary inspection of building.	657A.8	Assessment of costs.
657A.2	Petition.	657A.9	Discharge of receiver.
657A.3	Interested persons — opportunity to abate public nuisance.	657A.10	Compensation and liability of receiver.
657A.4	Appointment of receiver.	657A.10A	Applicability.
657A.5	Determination of costs of abatement.	657A.10B	Petition by city for title to abandoned property.
657A.6	Powers and duties of receiver.	657A.10C	Petition for injunction.
657A.6A	Receiver — prohibited acts.	657A.11	Jurisdiction — remedies.
		657A.12	Indexing of petition.

657A.1 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#), unless context requires otherwise:

1. “*Abandoned*” or “*abandonment*” means that a building is vacant, or is occupied only by trespassers, and in violation of the housing code or building code of the city in which the property is located or the housing code or building code applicable in the county in which the property is located if outside the limits of a city.

2. “*Abate*” or “*abatement*” in connection with property means the removal or correction of hazardous conditions deemed to constitute a public nuisance or the making of improvements needed to effect a rehabilitation of the property consistent with maintaining safe and habitable conditions over the remaining useful life of the property. However, the closing or boarding up of a building or structure that is found to be a public nuisance is not an abatement of the nuisance.

3. “*Building*” means a building or structure, excluding a mobile home, a modular home, and a manufactured home as defined in [section 435.1](#), unless the mobile home or manufactured home has been converted to real estate pursuant to [section 435.26](#), located in a city or outside the limits of a city in a county, which is used or intended to be used for commercial or industrial purposes or which is used or intended to be used for residential purposes and includes a building or structure in which some floors may be used for retail stores, shops, salesrooms, markets, or similar commercial uses, or for offices, banks, civic administration activities, professional services, or similar business or civic uses, and other floors are used, designed, or intended to be used for residential purposes.

4. “*Interested person*” means an owner, mortgagee, lienholder, or other person that possesses an interest of record or an interest otherwise provable in property that becomes subject to the jurisdiction of the court pursuant to [this chapter](#), the city in which the property is located, the county in which the property is located if the property is located outside the limits of a city, and an applicant for the appointment as receiver pursuant to [this chapter](#).

5. “*Neighboring landowner*” means an owner of property which is located within five hundred feet of property that becomes subject to the jurisdiction of the court pursuant to [this chapter](#).

6. “*Owner*” includes a person who is purchasing property by land installment contract or under a duly executed purchase contract.

7. “*Public nuisance*” means a building that is a menace to the public health, welfare, or safety, or that is structurally unsafe, unsanitary, or not provided with adequate safe egress, or that constitutes a fire hazard, or is otherwise dangerous to human life, or that in relation to the existing use constitutes a hazard to the public health, welfare, or safety by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, obsolescence, or abandonment.

8. “*Responsible building official*” or “*official*” means the person appointed by the city or,

if the building is outside the limits of a city, the county, to enforce its building codes and regulations in general or to enforce [this chapter](#) in particular.

85 Acts, ch 222, §1; 86 Acts, ch 1059, §1; 96 Acts, ch 1204, §27; 2015 Acts, ch 136, §49, 54, 55; 2019 Acts, ch 105, §3, 4

Referred to in §404.3B, 446.19B, 448.13

Subsections 1 and 3 amended

NEW subsection 8

657A.1A Preliminary inspection of building.

1. No sooner than one hundred thirty-five days after a property has become vacant, a person, other than a governmental entity, may request that the responsible building official inspect the property and certify that a property is both abandoned and in need of abatement. The responsible building official may also initiate an inspection on the official's own initiative at any time.

2. If the responsible building official finds from an exterior view of the property, in addition to any other credible information that the official may have, that there is reasonable cause to believe that the property is abandoned and in need of abatement, the official shall schedule a date and time for an inspection of the property by the official. The person requesting the inspection shall provide written notice of the scheduled inspection by first class mail and certified mail to the owner and all interested persons at least twenty days before the inspection. The notice must state the date, time, and place of the inspection and state that unless the owner appears at the inspection to allow the responsible building official access to the interior of the property, the official, accompanied by the person serving notice and any interested persons appearing for the inspection, may enter the property to determine whether the property is abandoned and in need of abatement and, if so, to estimate the costs of abatement. The official may enter the property for an inspection, along with the person serving notice and any interested persons, if the owner is not present for the inspection. Upon request, the inspection may be rescheduled as needed. The responsible building official must obtain an administrative search warrant pursuant to [section 808.14](#) to enter any building to conduct an inspection pursuant to [this section](#).

3. The responsible building official's findings shall be in writing with copies provided to the person requesting the inspection, the owner, and all interested parties. The governmental entity employing the responsible building official may establish and charge a fee to cover the reasonable costs of the inspection, which shall be added to costs in an action under [this chapter](#).

4. Evidence that financial obligations in respect to a building, including but not limited to payments of a mortgage, bills, or property taxes, are currently met does not rebut a finding of abandonment if the property is substantially in need of abatement in an action filed under [section 657A.2](#).

2019 Acts, ch 105, §5

Referred to in §631.1, 657A.2, 657A.8, 657A.10A, 657A.10B

NEW section

657A.2 Petition.

1. No sooner than the latter of thirty days after provision of the responsible building official's findings under [section 657A.1A](#) and six months after a building has become abandoned, a petition for abatement under [this chapter](#) may be filed in the district court of the county in which the property is located by the city in which the property is located, by the county if the property is located outside the limits of a city, by a neighboring landowner, or by a duly organized nonprofit corporation which has as one of its goals the improvement of housing conditions in the county or city in which the property in question is located. The petition shall not demand a personal judgment against any party, but shall concern only the interests in the property. A petition for abatement filed under [this chapter](#) shall include the legal description of the real property upon which the public nuisance is located unless the public nuisance is not situated on or confined to a parcel of real property, or is portable or capable of being removed from the real property. Service shall be made on all interested persons by personal service or, if personal service cannot be made, by certified mail and

first class mail to the last known address of record of the interested person and by posting the notice in a conspicuous place on the building, or by publication. The last known address of record for the property owner shall be the address of record with the county treasurer of the county where the property is located. Service may also be made as provided in [section 654.4A](#).

2. If entering judgment, the court shall determine any issues at law, including issues relating to title, raised by the plaintiff or by a party in interest who has filed a motion or answer.

3. In any evidentiary hearing or motion in a proceeding under [this chapter](#), the written findings of the responsible building official relating to the condition of the building and other matters within the scope of [this chapter](#), if provided at least ten days before the hearing to all persons not in default, shall be accepted as evidence without prejudice to the right of any party to require the personal testimony of the responsible building official at the hearing.

4. If the court finds at a hearing pursuant to [this section](#) that the building is abandoned or is a public nuisance, the court may issue an injunction requiring the owner to correct any conditions that make such building a public nuisance, or issue another order that the court deems appropriate to address the public nuisance.

5. If the court finds at a hearing pursuant to [this section](#) that the building is abandoned, unless the court order establishes otherwise, the property shall be deemed continuously abandoned from the date the action is indexed pursuant to [section 617.10, subsection 1](#).

6. A property shall not be claimed as homestead pursuant to [chapter 561](#) on or after the date determined in [subsection 5](#).

7. In a proceeding under [this section](#), if the court determines the building is not abandoned, the court shall dismiss the petition and may require the petitioner to pay an interested party's reasonable attorney fees. An owner of the property who failed to appear for an inspection pursuant to [section 657A.1A](#) shall not be awarded attorney fees under [this section](#).

8. If a party to the action holds an interest in the property as a nominee, a fiduciary, or another representative capacity for a third party, or an underlying loan on the property is guaranteed by a third party, the party to the action may apply to the court for a stay of action, as it affects the party's interest, for a reasonable time to allow the party to obtain the appropriate authority, information, or instructions from or on behalf of the beneficiary or guarantor as related to the property interest or underlying loan.

[85 Acts, ch 222, §2; 87 Acts, ch 113, §1, 2; 96 Acts, ch 1204, §28; 2004 Acts, ch 1165, §9, 11; 2010 Acts, ch 1050, §10; 2019 Acts, ch 105, §6](#)

Referred to in [§655A.6, 657A.1A, 657A.7, 657A.10A, 657A.10B, 657A.10C](#)

Section stricken and rewritten

657A.3 Interested persons — opportunity to abate public nuisance.

1. Before appointing a receiver to perform work or to furnish material to abate a public nuisance under [this chapter](#), the court shall establish a date before which interested persons may file with the court written proof of intent and ability to promptly undertake the work required and to post security for the performance of the work. If no such written proof is filed by that date, the court may appoint a receiver pursuant to [subsection 3](#).

2. All amounts expended by the person toward abating the public nuisance are a lien on the property if the expenditures are approved in advance by a judge and if the person desires the lien. Unless an interested person has a contract with the owner providing for a different interest rate, the lien shall bear interest at the rate provided for judgments pursuant to [section 535.3](#), and shall be payable upon terms approved by the judge. If a certified copy of a court order approving the expenses and the terms of payment for the lien, and a description of the property in question, are filed of record within thirty days of the date of issuance of the order in the office of the county recorder of the county in which the property is located, the lien has the same priority as the mortgage of a receiver as provided in [section 657A.7](#).

3. If the court determines by the date established in [subsection 1](#) or at a hearing on the sufficiency of a timely filed rehabilitation plan that no interested person can undertake the work and furnish the materials required to abate the public nuisance, or if the court

determines at any time after the hearing that an interested person who is undertaking corrective work pursuant to [this section](#) cannot or will not proceed, or has not proceeded with due diligence, the court may appoint a receiver to take possession and control of the property. The receiver shall be appointed in the manner provided in [section 657A.4](#).

4. If the building is a historic building or is located in a designated historic district, the court shall give preference to an economically feasible rehabilitation plan that preserves the historical nature of the building.

5. Unless a receiver's mortgage provides for periodic payments, a notice, in lieu of the notice pursuant to [section 654.2D](#), shall also be served by ordinary or electronic mail informing all interested persons of the date certain for the maturity of the mortgage note, or the event triggering maturity of the mortgage note, and that on maturity the receiver's mortgage loan will be payable in full and the mortgagee may then commence foreclosure without further notice. A notice pursuant to [section 654.4B](#) shall also be served by ordinary or electronic mail on the owner of record of the property. The mortgagee shall not commence foreclosure of the mortgage until sixty calendar days have passed since the date of service of a notice under [this subsection](#).

[85 Acts, ch 222, §3; 2019 Acts, ch 105, §7](#)

Referred to in [§657A.4](#), [657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

Section amended

657A.4 Appointment of receiver.

If after expiration of a date established pursuant to [section 657A.3, subsection 1](#), or a hearing pursuant to [section 657A.3](#), the court may appoint a receiver to take possession and control of the property in question. A person shall not be appointed as a receiver unless the person has first provided the court with a viable financial and construction plan for the rehabilitation of the property in question and has demonstrated the capacity and expertise to perform the required work in a satisfactory manner. The appointed receiver may be a financial institution that possesses an interest of record in the property, a nonprofit corporation that is duly organized and exists for the primary purpose of improving housing conditions in the county or city in which the property in question is located, or any person deemed qualified by the court. No part of the net earnings of a nonprofit corporation serving as a receiver under [this section](#) shall benefit a private shareholder or individual. Membership on the board of trustees of a nonprofit corporation does not constitute the holding of a public office or employment and is not an interest, either direct or indirect, in a contract or expenditure of money by a city or county. No member of a board of trustees of a nonprofit corporation appointed as receiver is disqualified from holding public office or employment, nor is a member required to forfeit public office or employment by reason of the membership on the board of trustees.

[85 Acts, ch 222, §4; 96 Acts, ch 1204, §29; 2019 Acts, ch 105, §8](#)

Referred to in [§657A.3](#), [657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

Section amended

657A.5 Determination of costs of abatement.

1. Prior to ordering work or the furnishing of materials to abate a public nuisance under [this chapter](#), the court shall make all of the following findings:

a. The estimated cost of the labor, materials, and financing required to abate the public nuisance.

b. The estimated income and expenses of the property after the furnishing of the materials and the completion of the repairs and improvements.

c. The need for and terms of financing for the performance of the work and the furnishing of the materials.

d. If repair and rehabilitation of the property are not found to be feasible, the cost of demolition of the property or the portions of the property that constitute the public nuisance.

2. Upon the written request of all the known interested persons to have the property or portions of the property demolished, the court may order the demolition. However,

demolition shall not be ordered unless the requesting persons have paid the costs of demolition, the costs of the receivership, and all notes and mortgages of the receivership.

[85 Acts, ch 222, §5](#)

Referred to in [§657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

657A.6 Powers and duties of receiver.

Before proceeding with the receiver's duties, a receiver appointed by the court shall post a bond in an amount designated by the court. The court may empower the receiver to do the following:

1. Take possession and control of the property, operate and manage the property, establish and collect rents and income, lease and rent the property, and evict tenants. An existing housing or building ordinance violation does not restrict the receiver's authority pursuant to [this subsection](#).

2. Pay all expenses of operating and conserving the property, including but not limited to the cost of electricity, gas, water, sewerage, heating fuel, repairs and supplies, custodian services, taxes, assessments, and insurance premiums, and hire and pay reasonable compensation to a managing agent.

3. Pay prereceivership mortgages and other liens and installments of prereceivership mortgages and other liens.

4. Perform or enter into contracts for the performance of work and the furnishing of materials necessary to abate the public nuisance, and obtain financing for the abatement of the public nuisance.

5. Pursuant to court order, remove and dispose of personal property which is abandoned, stored, or otherwise located on the property, that creates a dangerous or unsafe condition or that constitutes a violation of housing or building regulations or ordinances.

6. Obtain mortgage insurance for a receiver's mortgage from an agency of the federal government.

7. Enter into agreements and take actions necessary to maintain and preserve the property and to comply with housing and building regulations and ordinances.

8. Give the custody of the property and the opportunity to abate the nuisance and operate the property to the owner or to a mortgagee or a lienholder of record.

9. Issue notes and secure the notes by mortgages bearing interest at the rate provided for judgments pursuant to [section 535.3](#), and any terms and conditions as approved by the court. The court may provide for a higher interest rate if the receiver has established to the satisfaction of the court that the receiver has sought financing from individuals and institutions willing to lend money for rehabilitation of property and that the terms proposed by the receiver are reasonable. When transferred by the receiver in return for valuable consideration including money, material, labor, or services, the notes issued by the receiver are freely transferable. If the receiver has notice that the mortgagee of the receiver's mortgage is contemplating a transfer of the mortgage, the receiver shall disclose such to the court in the application for approval of the mortgage.

[85 Acts, ch 222, §6](#); [2019 Acts, ch 105, §9](#)

Referred to in [§657A.8](#), [657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

Subsection 9 amended

657A.6A Receiver — prohibited acts.

Notwithstanding [section 657A.10](#), it shall be unlawful, and a receiver may be held liable for actual damages as determined by a court, for entering a residential property that is not abandoned for the purpose of forcing, intimidating, harassing, or coercing a lawful occupant of the property to vacate in order to render the property vacant and abandoned, and it shall be unlawful to otherwise force, intimidate, harass, or coerce a lawful occupant of a residential property to vacate so the property may be deemed vacant and abandoned. A receiver who peacefully enters a property for the purpose of rendering the property vacant and abandoned shall be immune from liability if the receiver makes a good-faith effort to comply with [this](#)

[chapter](#) and all terms of any applicable mortgage, lease, or other agreement related to the occupancy of the building.

[2019 Acts, ch 105, §10](#)

Referred to in [§657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

NEW section

657A.7 Priority of receiver's mortgage.

1. If the receiver's mortgage is filed of record in the office of the county recorder of the county in which the property is located within sixty days of the issuance of a secured note, the receiver's mortgage is a first lien upon the property and is superior to claims of the receiver and to all prior or subsequent liens and encumbrances except taxes and assessments, including taxes and assessments advanced by any mortgagee in the twelve-month period immediately preceding the date a petition is filed pursuant to [section 657A.2](#). Priority among the receiver's mortgages is determined by the order in which the mortgages are recorded.

2. The creation of a mortgage lien under [this chapter](#) prior to or superior to a mortgage of record at the time the receiver's mortgage lien was created does not disqualify a prior recorded mortgage as a legal investment.

3. If a mortgagee of the receiver's mortgage begins foreclosure procedures pursuant to [chapter 655A](#) and an interested party desires to pay off the mortgage loan, the interested party shall also pay the mortgagee's reasonable costs and attorney fees.

[85 Acts, ch 222, §7; 2019 Acts, ch 105, §11, 12](#)

Referred to in [§657A.3](#), [657A.8](#), [657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

Subsection 1 amended

NEW subsection 3

657A.8 Assessment of costs.

The court may assess the costs and expenses set out in [section 657A.6, subsection 2](#), and may approve receiver's fees to the extent that the fees are not covered by the income from the property. The receiver shall pay the costs and reasonable attorney fees of a plaintiff who requested an inspection pursuant to [section 657A.1A](#) unless an interested party not in default who appeared for the inspection objects to the fees and costs in whole or in part. The court shall determine the merits of such objection. If the court finds that a neighboring landowner has pursued an action pursuant to this chapter in bad faith, the court may assess attorney fees against the neighboring landowner and may bar such neighboring landowner from filing future actions under [this chapter](#). If a foreclosure of the receiver's mortgage pursuant to [chapter 655A](#) is contemplated, the court may retain jurisdiction to determine the amount of attorney fees payable under [section 657A.7, subsection 3](#).

[85 Acts, ch 222, §8; 2019 Acts, ch 105, §13](#)

Referred to in [§657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

Section amended

657A.9 Discharge of receiver.

The receiver may be discharged at any time in the discretion of the court. The receiver shall be discharged when all of the following have occurred:

1. The public nuisance has been abated.
2. The costs of the receivership have been paid.
3. Either all the receiver's notes and mortgages issued pursuant to [this chapter](#) have been paid, or all the holders of the notes and mortgages request in writing that the receiver be discharged.

[85 Acts, ch 222, §9](#)

Referred to in [§657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

657A.10 Compensation and liability of receiver.

1. A receiver appointed under [this chapter](#) is entitled to receive fees and commissions in the same manner and to the same extent as receivers appointed in actions to foreclose mortgages.

2. The receiver appointed under [this chapter](#) is not civilly or criminally liable for actions pursuant to [this chapter](#) taken in good faith.

[85 Acts, ch 222, §10](#); [86 Acts, ch 1238, §27](#)

Referred to in [§657A.6A](#), [657A.10A](#), [657A.10B](#)

657A.10A Applicability.

1. The provisions of [sections 657A.1A through 657A.10](#) shall only apply to cities and counties that have, by ordinance, provided that the provisions shall apply.

2. The provisions of [sections 657A.1A through 657A.10](#) shall not apply to a house, barn, outbuilding, or other building or structure located on agricultural land. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “agricultural land” means land suitable for use in farming. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “farming” means the cultivation of land for the production of agricultural crops, the production of fruit or other horticultural crops, grazing, or the production of livestock.

[2019 Acts, ch 105, §15, 17](#)

Referred to in [§657A.10B](#)

Former [§657A.10A](#) transferred to [§657A.10B](#) pursuant to directive; [2019 Acts, ch 105, §17](#)

NEW section

657A.10B Petition by city for title to abandoned property.

1. a. In lieu of the procedures in [sections 657A.1A through 657A.10](#) and [657A.10A](#), a city in which a building that has been abandoned for at least six consecutive months is located may petition the court to enter judgment awarding title to the abandoned property to the city. A petition filed under [this section](#) shall include the legal description of the abandoned property. If more than one abandoned building is located on a parcel of real estate, the city may combine the actions into one petition. The owner of the building and grounds, mortgagees of record, lienholders of record, or other known persons who hold an interest in the property shall be named as respondents on the petition.

b. The petition shall be filed in the district court of the county in which the property is located. Service on the owner and any other named respondents shall be by personal service or certified mail or, if service cannot be made by either method, by posting the notice in a conspicuous place on the building and by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the city. The action shall be in equity.

2. Not sooner than sixty days after the filing of the petition, the city may request a hearing on the petition.

3. In determining whether a property has been abandoned, the court shall consider the following for each building that is located on the property and named in the petition and the building grounds:

a. Whether any property taxes or special assessments on the property were delinquent at the time the petition was filed.

b. Whether any utilities are currently being provided to the property.

c. Whether the building is unoccupied by the owner or lessees or licensees of the owner.

d. Whether the building meets the city’s housing code as being fit for human habitation, occupancy, or use.

e. Whether the building meets the city’s building code as being fit for occupancy or use.

f. Whether the building is exposed to the elements such that deterioration of the building is occurring.

g. Whether the building is boarded up or otherwise secured from unauthorized entry.

h. Past efforts to rehabilitate the building and grounds.

i. Whether those claiming an interest in the property have, prior to the filing of the petition, demonstrated a good-faith effort to restore the property to productive use.

j. The presence of vermin, accumulation of debris, and uncut vegetation.

k. The effort expended by the petitioning city to maintain the building and grounds.

l. Past and current compliance with orders of the local housing or building code official.

m. Any other evidence the court deems relevant.

4. In lieu of the considerations in [subsection 3](#), if the city can establish to the court’s satisfaction that all parties with an interest in the property have received proper notice and either consented to the entry of an order awarding title to the property to the city or did not

make a good-faith effort to comply with the order of the local housing or building code official within sixty days after the filing of the petition, the court shall enter judgment against the respondents granting the city title to the property.

5. If the court determines that the property has been abandoned or that [subsection 4](#) applies, the court shall enter judgment and order awarding title to the city. The title awarded to the city shall be free and clear of any claims, liens, or encumbrances held by the respondents.

6. If a city files a petition under [subsection 1](#), naming the holder of a tax sale certificate of purchase for the property as a respondent, the city shall also file the petition, along with a verified statement declaring that the property identified in the petition contains an abandoned building, with the county treasurer. Upon receiving the petition and verified statement, the county treasurer shall make an entry in the county system canceling the sale of the property and shall refund the purchase money to the tax sale certificate holder.

[2004 Acts, ch 1165, §10, 11](#)

C2005, §657A.10A

[2010 Acts, ch 1050, §11, 12; 2013 Acts, ch 30, §261; 2015 Acts, ch 136, §50 – 55; 2019 Acts, ch 105, §14, 17](#)

C2020, §657A.10B

Referred to in [§448.13](#)

Section transferred from §657A.10A in Code 2020 pursuant to directive in 2019 Acts, ch 105, §17

Subsection 1, paragraph a amended

657A.10C Petition for injunction.

1. As an alternative to the remedies under [this chapter](#), a city, or a county if a property that is alleged to be a public nuisance is located outside the limits of a city, may petition the court for an injunction that requires the owner of the property to correct or eliminate the condition or violation causing the public nuisance. Service of the original notice shall be made as provided in [section 657A.2, subsection 1](#).

2. [This section](#) shall not apply to a house, barn, outbuilding, or other building or structure located on agricultural land. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “*agricultural land*” means land suitable for use in farming. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “*farming*” means the cultivation of land for the production of agricultural crops, the production of fruit or other horticultural crops, grazing, or the production of livestock.

[2019 Acts, ch 105, §16](#)

NEW section

657A.11 Jurisdiction — remedies.

1. An action pursuant to [this chapter](#) is exclusively within the jurisdiction of district judges as provided in [section 602.6202](#).

2. [This chapter](#) does not prevent a person from using other remedies or procedures to enforce building or housing ordinances or to correct or remove public nuisances.

[85 Acts, ch 222, §11](#)

657A.12 Indexing of petition.

1. When a petition affecting real property is filed by a governmental entity under [this chapter](#), the clerk of the district court shall index the petition pursuant to [section 617.10](#), if the legal description of the affected property is included in or attached to the petition.

2. After filing the petition with the clerk of the district court, the governmental entity shall also file the petition in the office of the county treasurer. The county treasurer shall include a notation of the pendency of the action in the county system, as defined in [section 445.1](#), until the judgment of the court is satisfied or until the action is dismissed. Pursuant to [section 446.7](#), an affected property that is subject to a pending action shall not be offered for sale by the county treasurer at a tax sale.

[2010 Acts, ch 1050, §13; 2016 Acts, ch 1011, §113](#)



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Mayor

DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023

ITEM TITLE: Committee and Board Appointments

DISCUSSION:

The Mayor has asked to have a discussion about Committees and Board Appointments that he performs in his role as Mayor. This item will be to discuss those appointments and the intention is to then bring them forward to the Dec. 11th City Council Meeting for consideration by the Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023

ITEM TITLE: City Insurance RFP

DISCUSSION:

Staff was asked by a Council Member to consider trying to find a local insurance provider for the City's insurance needs. Staff is certainly on board with looking at options, and as such suggests issuing an RFP. An example RFP is attached for review and comment.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

You are invited to submit a service proposal for the property and casualty coverage package as requested by the City of Independence, Iowa.

Deadline for submittal:

Contact Person, Title: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA

Email Address: mschmitz@independenceia.org

Phone Number: 319-334-2780

1.0 Description of Service

The City of Independence (“the Entity”) requests proposals from interested and qualified insurance agencies and agents desiring to provide insurance services to the Entity that include but are not limited to: insurance servicing; general advice and claims assistance; cost reduction services and safety and loss control programs; and blanket bond issuance. Further, knowledge of the following coverage-related issues is essential: property; boiler and machinery (equipment breakdown); general liability; workers’ compensation; automobile liability and auto physical damage; public officials’ liability (errors and omissions); law enforcement liability; and blanket bond coverage. To act as the servicing agent/agency, one must meet or exceed each of the service criteria detailed below:

- A. Analyze the insurance needs of the Entity and provide written recommendations for change where appropriate or dictated by changing exposures, market conditions, and/or laws.
- B. Organize renewal information and prepare insurance specifications.
- C. Conduct a review of the Entity’s Statement of Values (SOV) and complete an on-site visit of the locations listed on the SOV on an annual basis.
- D. Obtain coverage/policy documents from coverage providers and provide them to the Entity in a timely fashion. Keep the Entity apprised of any delays.
- E. Review all binders, coverage documents, and endorsements to ensure coverage is as intended. Verify the accuracy of all coverage documents and invoices before delivery.
- F. Maintain a summary of all coverage lines and endorsements. This should identify the type of coverage, coverage provider name, policy/coverage period, and a brief synopsis of the coverage features, limits, deductibles, and contributions/premiums. Summary listings must be updated as revisions/changes occur.
- G. Oversee and coordinate all relevant services performed by coverage providers/underwriters or any related service agencies.
- H. Place, cancel, and otherwise handle, at the direction of and benefit of the Entity, all coverage placements, binders, policies, and endorsements in a timetable that avoids lapses in coverage.
- I. Assist the Entity in the submittal of claims to coverage provider(s). Interface with the provider when coverage issues arise.

- J. Perform administrative and clerical services relative to account management, including but not limited to Issuance of certificates of insurance and verification of the accuracy of bills, audits, and all payment/contribution adjustments.
- K. Submit all payments/contributions to carriers and other parties. All payments/contributions will be made payable to the selected insurance agency.
- L. Assign a representative to the Entity who will be responsible for communication with the Entity officials and who, along with any other representatives assigned, must be available to the Entity for consultation on insurance-related issues and concerns.
- M. Attend meetings related to the insurance program with the Entity Administrator and other parties, as requested.
- N. Review any related insurance company audits for accuracy.
- O. Review various insurance publications and provide the Entity with copies of articles and other items applicable to municipal insurance issues.
- P. Provide the Entity with municipal market trends and news updates regularly.
- Q. Coordinate (at a minimum) annual claims meetings with the Entity Administrator and a representative of the underwriters.
- R. Act as a liaison between the Entity and coverage provider/carrier to resolve claims.
- S. Advise the Entity, when requested, on coverage applicability to specific claims.
- T. Review loss runs quarterly, provide copies of the loss runs to the Entity, and advise the Entity of any anticipated problems.

2.0 Eligible Insurance Agents

- A. Must be a licensed Iowa agent with a minimum of two years of successful experience writing insurance as specified.
- B. The agent (or agency) awarded a proposal must act as servicing agent for the Entity (adhering to each of the service criteria detailed in section 1.0) for the life of the policy unless permission is otherwise granted by the Entity.
- C. Must be willing and able to place coverage with the Entity's existing major provider, currently ICAP, if the Entity deems it necessary and/or advantageous.

3.0 Insurance Agency Compensation and Payment of Contribution

The insurance agent/agency's time, services, and expenses to perform each of the services specified in the service criteria of section 1.0 shall be included in an all-inclusive annual compensation charge listed in the insurance agency's proposal as a commission percentage of the Entity's insurance package. No other charges shall be paid to the insurance agency.

4.0 Outline Format for Response

A. Minimum Qualification Document.

The following information must be provided to determine if the insurance agency meets the minimum qualifications of this request for proposal:

1. The insurance agency's office address in the State of Iowa.
2. A copy of the agency's certificate of authority to do business in the State of Iowa.
3. Documentation of the agency's ability to provide coverage through ICAP.

B. Insurance Agency Qualifications and Experience.

Please provide the following information:

1. Number of years the agency has been operating in the State of Iowa.
2. A description of the agency's local size and number of local staff, a description of the number of agents, support staff, etc. A general description of the agency (Number of clients, total number of commercial clients, municipal (City, County, School) clients, etc.)
3. A list of the municipal insurance markets the agency can access.
4. An explanation of the agency's experience in the commercial insurance market and any special experience the agency has in placing coverages for a municipality.
5. A list of additional services offered by the insurance agency that may be of interest to the Entity in the management of the Entity's risks.

C. Assigned Representative Qualifications and Experience

Please provide the following information:

1. Educational background that includes the steps taken to remain current with insurance industry trends (refer to the public entity sector, if applicable).
2. Work experience that includes all past employment, number of years in the insurance field, and length of time in current position.
3. Explanation of personal knowledge of insurance markets, highlighting municipal experience.

5.0 Evaluation and Recommendation

The Entity intends to solicit proposals from potentially qualified insurance agency(s); to evaluate proposals; to negotiate terms; and to award a contract to the insurance agency whose proposal is determined to serve in the best interest of the Entity. As such, it is expected the insurance agency does not have any unresolved issues (performance-related or otherwise) with the Entity or any other local agencies.

If deemed necessary and appropriate, the Entity may develop a committee, consisting of The Entity representatives and outside resources, to evaluate submitted proposals. The Entity reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification of any information submitted, including any omission from the original proposal. All proposals will be treated equally concerning this item. In the event such a committee is enacted, it may offer candidate recommendation(s) to the Entity, on which the Entity may or may not choose to act.

Selection Criteria Includes:

Selection of the Consultant will include the following criteria:

- Responsiveness to the purpose and scope of the project;
- Adherence to the conditions, rules, regulations, and requirements of the RFP;
- Experience and reputation of the Consultant;
- Professional qualifications of the specific individuals assigned to complete the project;
- The work plan and schedule for completion of the project; and

- Cost of the services

Confidentiality

As part of its proposal, the Consultant shall certify that all information it may receive in the course of conducting its work shall be treated as confidential and proprietary. Such information and data may not be disseminated to others without the written approval of the City of Independence City Manager.

Records Retention

The Consultant shall maintain records applicable to the contract. All such records are to be retained for three (3) years after the final payment is made.

Executed Contract to Include RFP

The contents of this RFP (including all attachments, revisions, addendums, and additions) shall become part of the consultant services contract. The Consultant's standard consultant services contract shall be included in the proposal.

6.0 The Entity's General Terms and Conditions

A. Subcontracting

No portion of this work may be subcontracted without written approval by the Entity.

B. Completion of Proposal

The charges listed in your proposal should be all-inclusive charges as the Entity will not pay add-on or supplemental charges for copying, telephone calls, or other costs. Notes to indicate any deviations from the specifications are acceptable.

C. Local Preference

Preference shall be applied to bids/proposals received from agents/agencies located within the corporate limits of the City of Independence. For purposes of applying a local preference to this proposal, "local" shall mean any business which regularly maintains an office or place of business within the corporate limits of Independence, and has maintained such office or place of business for at least six (6) months prior to the date of this RFP. The City Council will take the local status of a business into consideration in awarding this contract, but shall not award a specific credit amount. It is the responsibility of the business providing the bid to identify itself as local.

D. Proposal Rejection, Acceptance, or Change

The Entity reserves the right to reject any or all proposals; accept a proposal the Entity deems to be in its best interests; waive technicalities in procedure; and negotiate changes or additional work to a selected proposal.

E. Taxes

The Entity is exempt from State sales tax. Any charges for taxes made from which the Entity is exempt will be deducted from invoices before payment is made.

F. Proposal Information is Public

All documents submitted with any bid or proposal shall become public documents and subject to Iowa Code Chapter 22. The submitting party recognizes this and waives any

claim against the Entity and any of its officers and employees relating to the release of any document or information that is submitted.

G. Hold Harmless Agreement

The insurance agency agrees to protect, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless The Entity and its officers and employees from any and all claims and damages of every kind and nature made, rendered, or incurred by or on behalf of the Entity or its employees.

H. Termination of Award for Cause

If, for any reason, the selected agent/agency fails to fulfill its obligations in a timely and proper manner, or if the agent/agency violates any of the covenants, agreements, or stipulations of the award, the Entity shall have the right to terminate the award by giving written notice to the agent/agency of such termination. In that event, all finished or unfinished services, reports, or other materials prepared by the agency or any of its employees shall become the property of the Entity. The agent/agency shall be entitled to receive compensation for any satisfactory work completed, documents prepared, or materials furnished to the Entity. Notwithstanding the above, the agent/agency shall not be relieved of liability to the Entity for damage sustained by the Entity by virtue of a breach of the award by the agent/agency. Further, the Entity may withhold any payments to the successful agent/agency for the purpose of set off until such time as the exact amount of damages due the Entity from the agent/agency is determined.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023

ITEM TITLE: Visioning Update

DISCUSSION:

Through a partnership with the Iowa Department of Transportation, Trees Forever, the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development Program, and Ritlan+Kuiper Landscape Architects, the City has worked through a Community Visioning program focusing primarily on the west half of the City and specifically the West corridor of 1st Street.

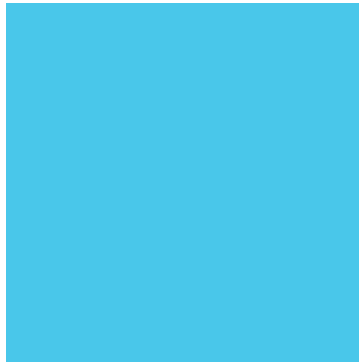
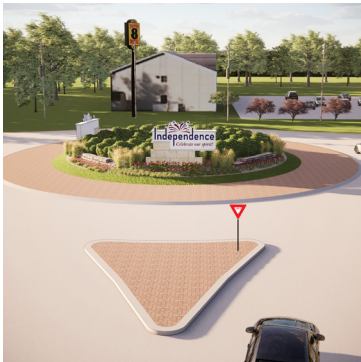
Attached is the final report of the process, along with copies of the presentation boards that have been shared with the public for review and discussion by the Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.



Final Report and Feasibility Study Independence, Iowa



Program Partners:
Iowa Department of Transportation
Trees Forever
Iowa State University



Participants

Town Steering Committee

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Todd Sherrets

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Kim Hansen

Matthew Schmitz

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About RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

Craig Ritland founded the firm Craig Ritland Landscape Architect (CRLA) in 1970 in Waterloo, Iowa. Since developing the master plan for George Wyth Memorial State Park in the early 1970s, this office has participated in many of the important public improvements that have added to the quantity and quality of open space in Iowa. With over 50 years of experience, Craig Ritland is still the lead principal of the firm, bringing invaluable insight and expertise to each project.

In 2013, CRLA became RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects, a full-service landscape architectural firm with Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Board and State Registered Landscape Architects. The firm consists of three full-time Landscape Architects with 78 years of combined experience.

Throughout our history, RKLA has provided park and recreation master planning and detailed design and construction services for a diverse array of city, county, and state recreation areas.

We enjoy utilizing a highly interactive process with our clients, often through the facilitation of public input. One example of this is our annual work over the past 25 years with the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program with Iowa State University and Trees Forever. We have guided the public input in more than 40 different communities and have helped them develop plans that, in many cases, have led to successful community enhancements.



RITLAND+KUIPER
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Program Overview

Independence is one of 10 communities selected to participate in the 2023 Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program. The program, which selects communities through a competitive application process, provides professional planning and design assistance along transportation corridors to small Iowa communities (populations of fewer than 10,000).

Goals for the Visioning Program include:

- Developing a conceptual plan and implementation strategies with local communities
- Enhancing the natural, cultural, and visual resources of communities
- Assisting local communities in using external funds as leverage for transportation corridor enhancement

Each visioning community works through a planning process consisting of four phases of concept development:

1. Program initiation
2. Needs assessment and goal setting
3. Development of a concept plan
4. Implementation and sustained action

Each visioning community is represented by a steering committee of local residents and stakeholders who take part in a series of meetings that are facilitated by field coordinators from Trees Forever. Iowa State University organizes design teams of professional landscape architects, design interns, and ISU faculty and staff. The program is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Community Goals

The Independence visioning committee identified a number of goals and priority areas during the visioning process, which are included below:

- 1st Street Corridor Improvements
- Trail Connections
- Signage & Way-finding

Capturing the Independence Vision

Based on the needs and desires of the local residents, as well as a detailed inventory of community resources, the design team developed a conceptual transportation enhancement plan. This plan, as well as the inventory information, is illustrated in the following set of presentation boards. These boards include the Program Overview, Bioregional Assessment, Transportation Assets and Barriers Assessment, Transportation Behavior and Needs Assessment, Hispanic Interview, Transportation Inventory and Analysis, Concept Overview, and Community Design Boards.

1



Entrance to Independence Along Jamestown Ave



Design Workshop Open House



1st Street W Corridor



Liberty Trail near East Elementary School

Program Overview

The city of Independence is one of 10 communities selected to participate in the 2023 Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program. The program, which selects communities through a competitive application process, provides professional planning and design assistance along transportation corridors to small Iowa communities (populations of fewer than 10,000).

- Goals for the Visioning Program include:
- Developing a conceptual plan and implementation strategies with local communities
 - Enhancing of the bioregional, cultural, and visual resources of communities
 - Assisting local communities in using external funds as leverage for transportation corridor enhancements

Community Goals

The Independence visioning committee identified a number of goals and priority areas during the visioning process. These include:

1st Street W Improvements: 1st Street W is a prominent corridor as you enter Independence from the west. The steering committee would like to improve the aesthetics of the corridor, as well as address drainage issues, add amenities, and enhance safety.

Trail Connections: The existing trails are poorly signed and lack amenities the community would like, such as signage, benches, lighting, and exercise equipment. The steering committee would like to expand existing trails and sidewalks to connect to priority locations within the community.

Signage & Way-finding: Independence has a new logo that the steering committee would like to use to create a consistent family of signage. The committee expressed its desire for community-wide way-finding signage to help residents and visitors find destinations.

Independence Program Overview

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects
Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA
Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University
Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



Bioregional Assessment

Historical Settlement Patterns

This page uses a map from *A.T. Andreas' Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, 1875* overlaid with present-day town boundaries and water bodies. Published in 1875, Andreas' Atlas is an extraordinary resource showing the post-Civil War landscape of Iowa, including settlement features (towns and villages, churches, schools, roads, railroads, etc.) and landscape features (water bodies, vegetated patches such as timber and swamp, and major topographic features). A high-quality scan of the Atlas has been arranged to correspond closely with present-day map, revealing major landscape changes as well as features that have persisted, such as railroad rights-of-way and in some cases remnant vegetation patches.

Independence in Context

Compare the 1875 boundaries of your town to the current boundaries. How much has your town grown?

Compare the course of the rivers in 1875 to their current course. Are there major changes in alignment or location? Are there vegetation patches shown in the 1875 map still in existence?



Historical Vegetation

The vegetation information shown here is derived from township maps made by the General Land Office (GLO) surveys beginning in 1836 through 1859. This information was digitized in 1996 as a resource for natural resource management and is useful "... for the study of long term ecological processes and as baseline data for the study of present day communities."¹

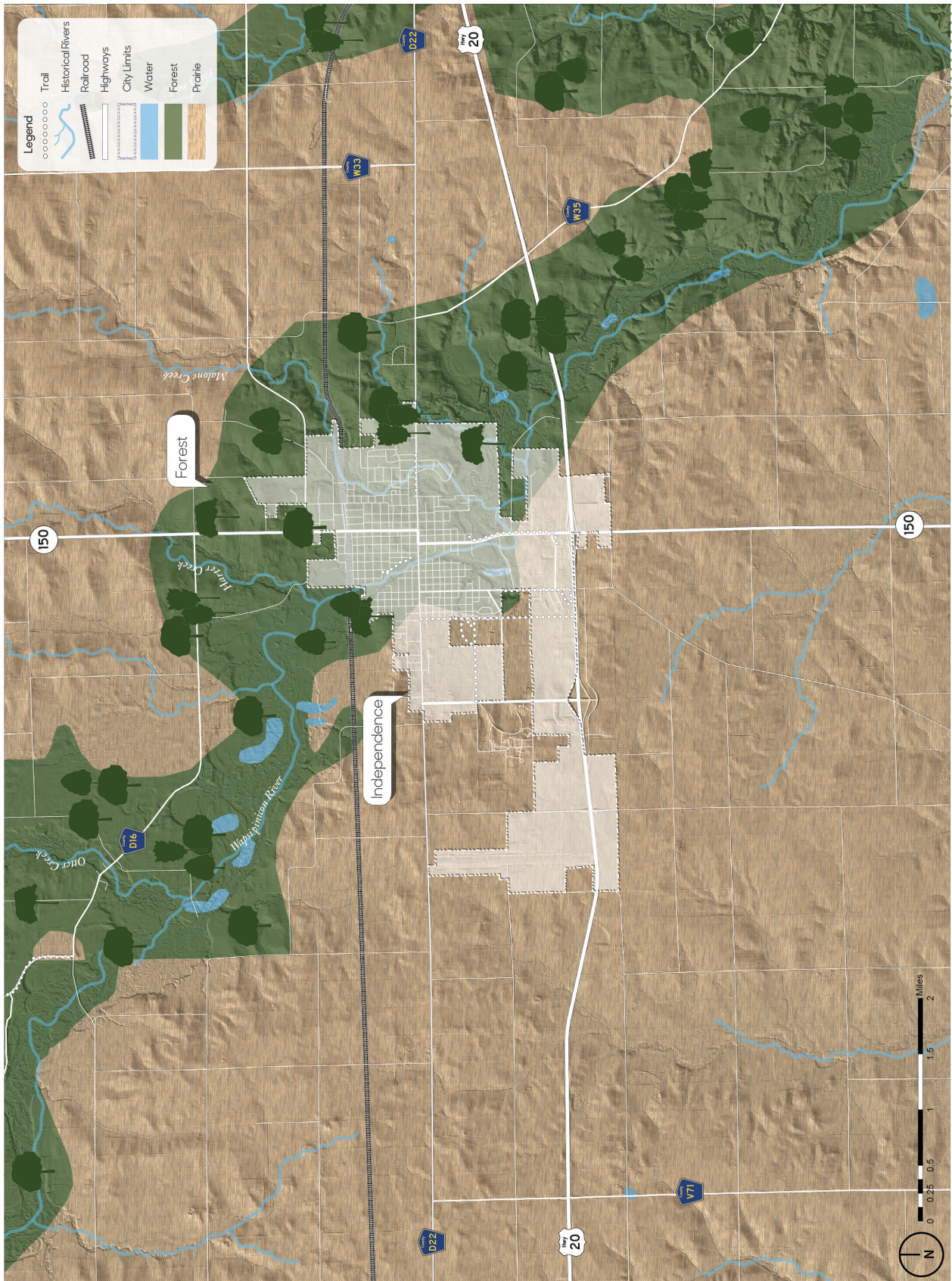
The plant community names mapped by the GLO surveyors varied. The original terminology they used has been preserved in the original data, but we have renamed them on this map to reflect names used to describe contemporary vegetation communities.

Not all communities will have all vegetation types, because various conditions that affect vegetation—such as geology, wind exposure, seasonally high water or groundwater, and frequency of fire—differ from place to place. Early land surveyors mapped the following vegetation types, some of which may not be present in the vicinity of your community:

The vegetation types are defined¹:

1. Forest: Tree dominated, with a mostly closed canopy. Ground vegetation shade tolerant. developed under infrequent fire.
2. Prairie: Perennial non-woody plants; fire dominated.

¹ J.E. Ebinger, "Presettlement Vegetation of Coles County, Illinois," Transactions of the Illinois Academy of Science (1987): 15–24, quoted in Michael Charles Miller, "Analysis of historic vegetation patterns in Iowa using Government Land Office surveys and a Geographic Information System" (master's thesis, Iowa State University, 1995), 8.

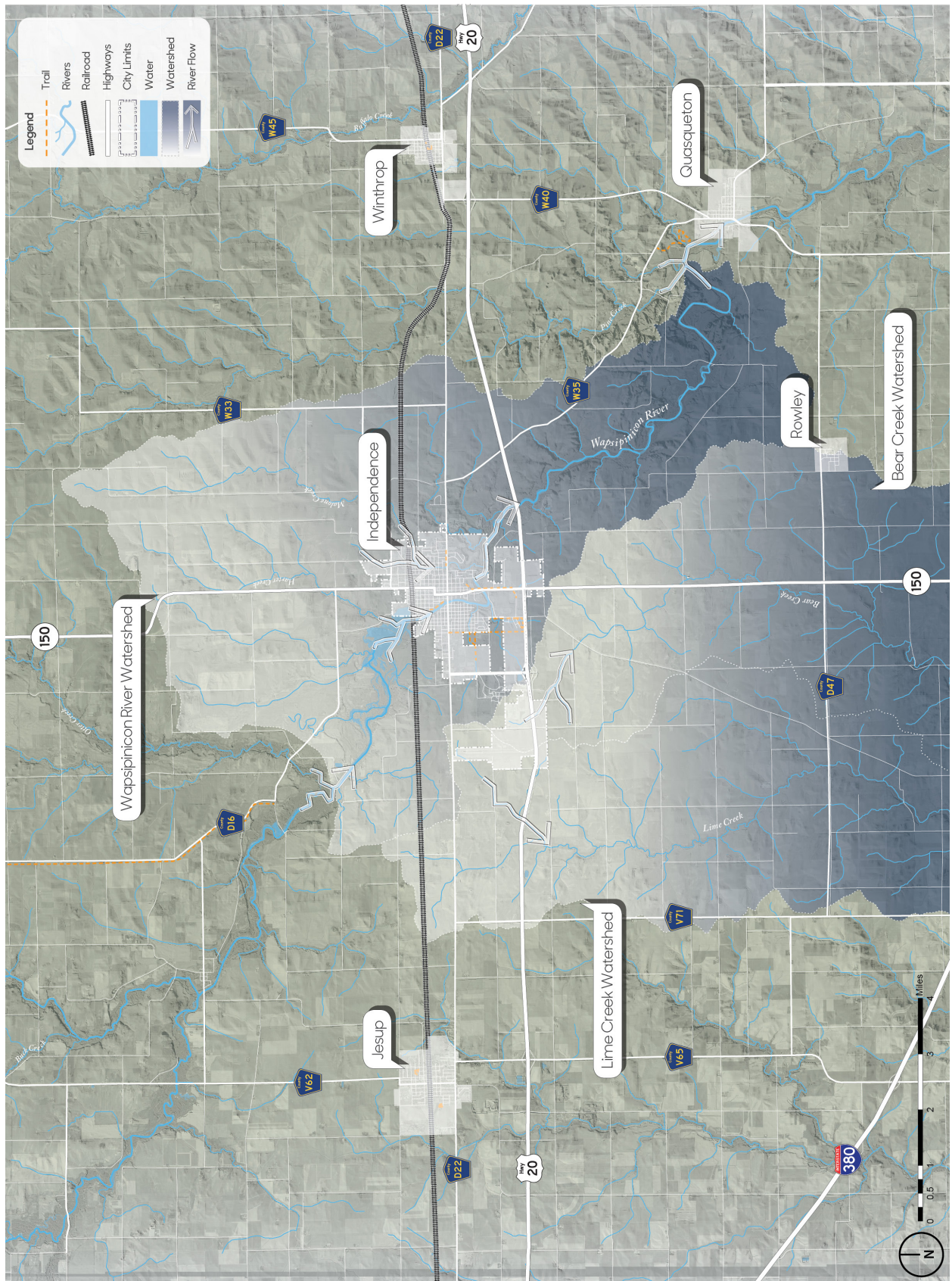


Regional Watershed

A watershed is a defined area or ridge of land with a boundary that separates waters flowing to different rivers, creeks, or basins. Watershed boundaries show the extent of a drainage area flowing to a single outlet point and determine whether precipitation is directed into one watershed or an adjacent watershed.

It is important to note that there are multiple levels of watersheds; for instance, the Iowa River watershed is composed of a dozen smaller watersheds, and the Iowa River watershed is a sub-basin of the Mississippi River watershed.

Where a community is located in relation to its surrounding watershed(s) determines its capacity to manage regional watershed issues such as flooding. For example, a community located near the end of a watershed (close to the outlet point) will have little capacity to reduce the amount of water draining toward it from upland areas.

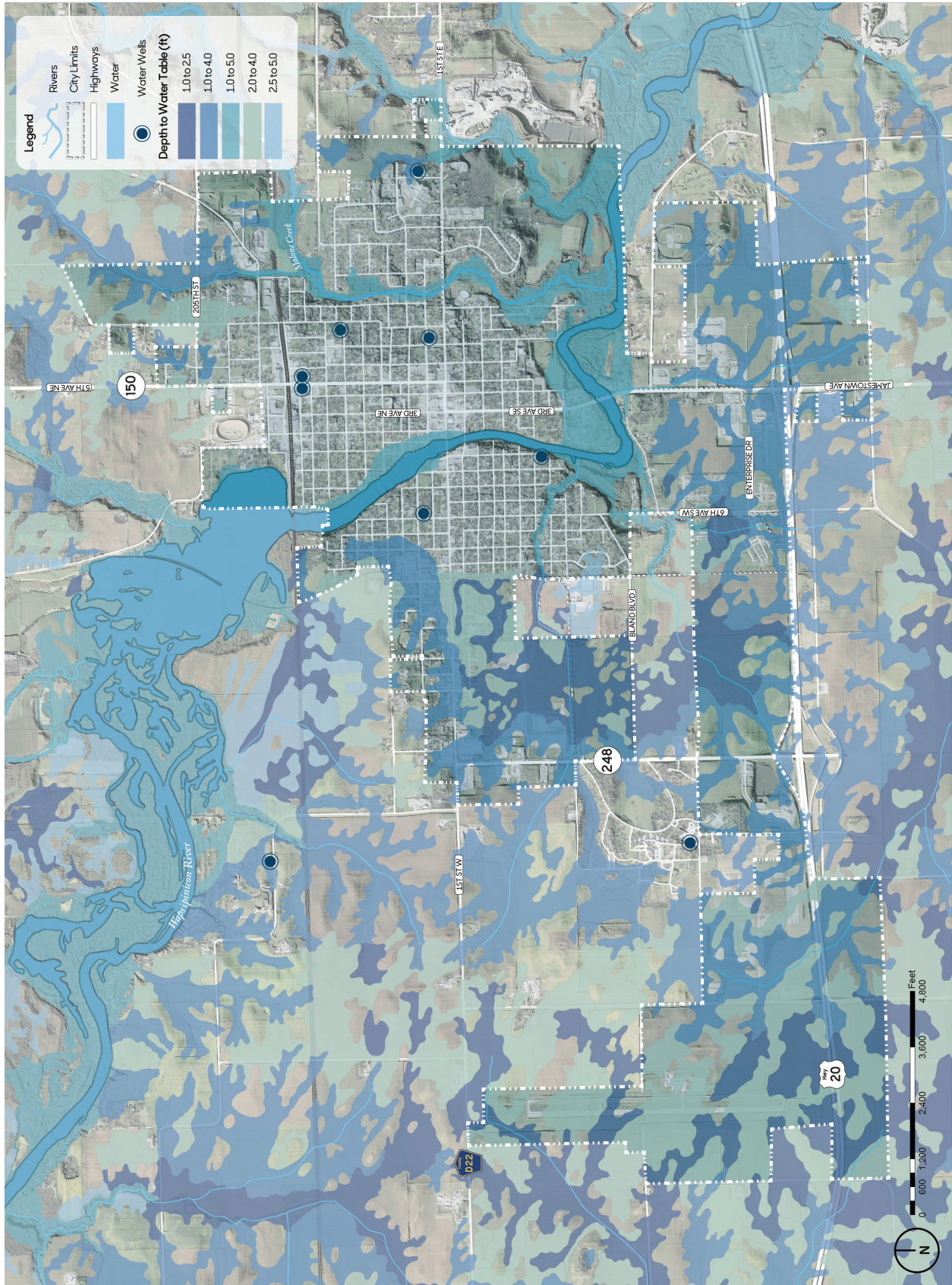


Depth to Water Table

The water table is defined as the distance below the surface at which the ground is saturated with water. Depth to water table is represented as a range because it varies due to seasonal changes and precipitation volumes. For example, following spring snowmelt, an area with a depth to water table ranging from one foot to three feet is likely to be at or near one-foot depth.

The map shows how close to the surface groundwater can be. Pavement and foundations are affected by groundwater near the surface. Freezing and thawing and upward pressure of rising groundwater can cause cracks or "frost boils" in pavement. Foundations can be wet and require "dewatering," which can be expensive.

Where the value is less than zero feet, water can well up out of the ground. This causes localized flooding, even if there is no surface water draining to the area.

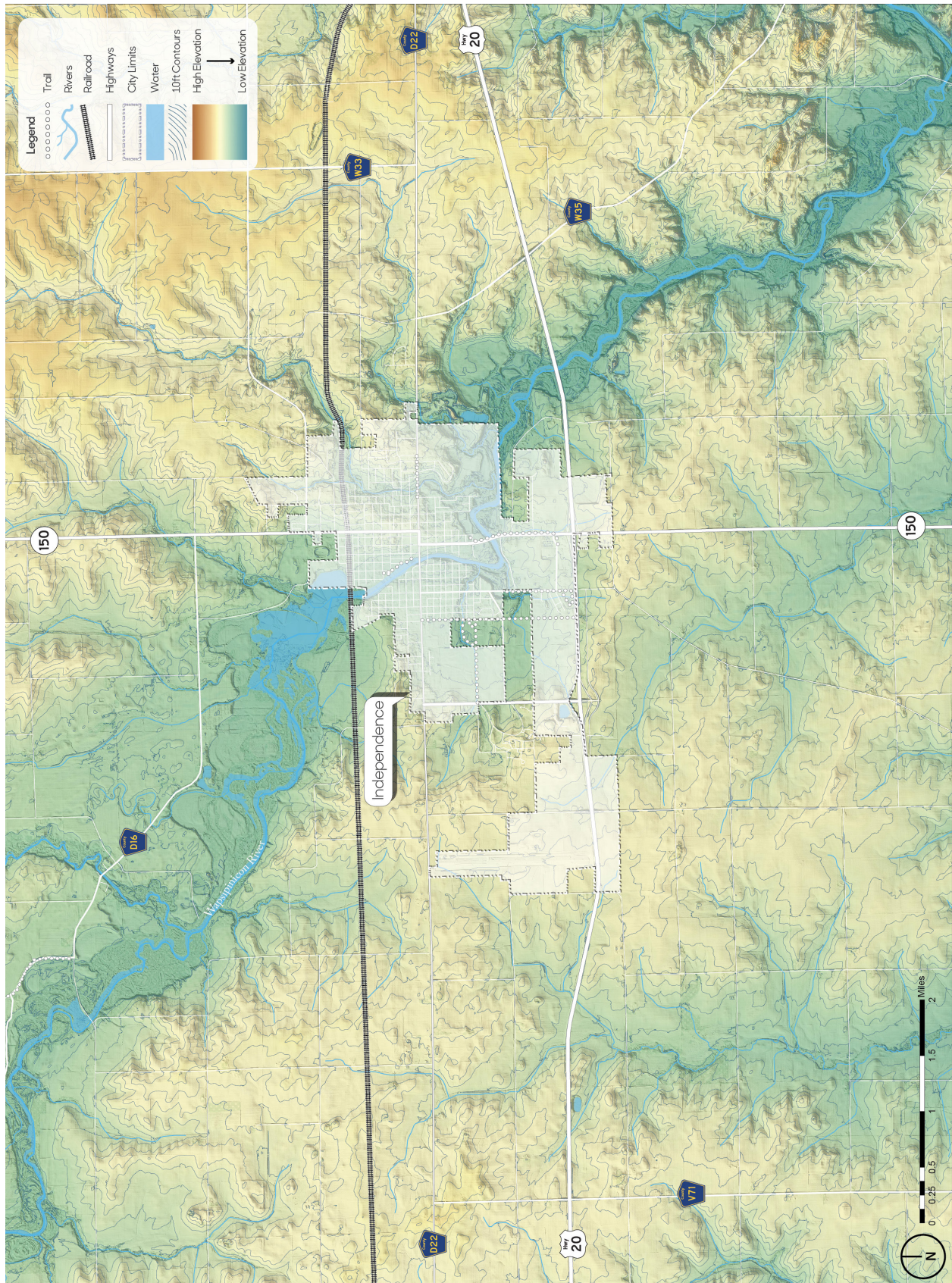


Elevation and Flow

This map displays topographic differences in elevation using a combination of contour lines and the color gradient depicted in the legend. The high and low points have also been located. Note the relationship of your community to the surrounding elevation. Is it located in a valley or on high ground, or is it split between the two?

If your community lies within or near a floodplain or floodway, the map reflects these features. Not all communities will have these elements; if they are absent on this map, none are present.

Flood risk is correlated to low-lying land. This map shows your community's flood risk as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Map Service Center. The map shows the two most important flood zones if present: the Base Flood and the Regulatory Floodway (consult legend). Base Flood is the zone having a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year, also referred to as the "100-year floodplain." The Regulatory Floodway is the channel of a stream plus any adjacent floodplain areas that must be kept free of encroachment so that the 1% flood discharge can be accommodated without increasing the base flood elevation.



Present-day Land Cover

The land-cover map depicts both natural and man-made land cover types with aerial imagery. The Iowa DNR created 15 unique classes for this dataset to differentiate land covers. Refer to the legend for a breakdown of land-cover types within your community boundaries.

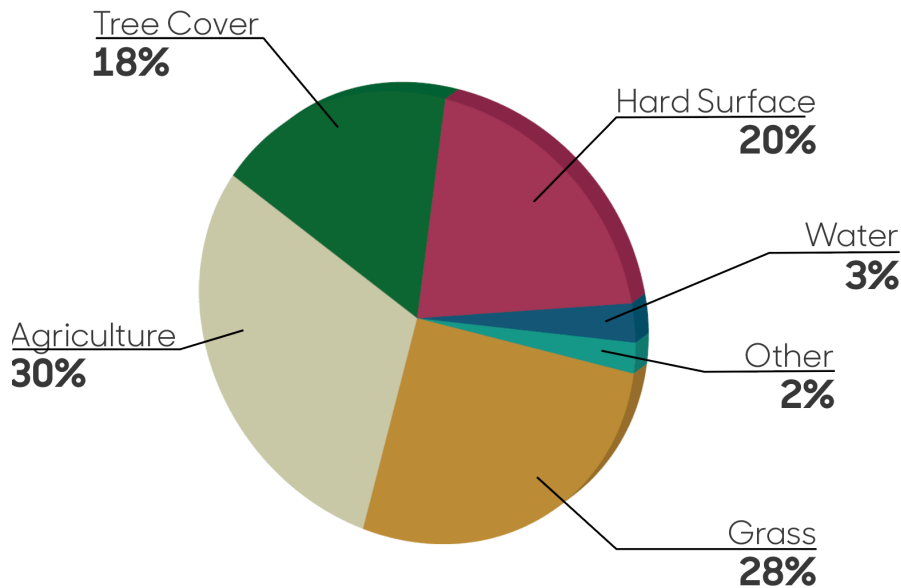
What do you observe about the dominant landcover types in your community?

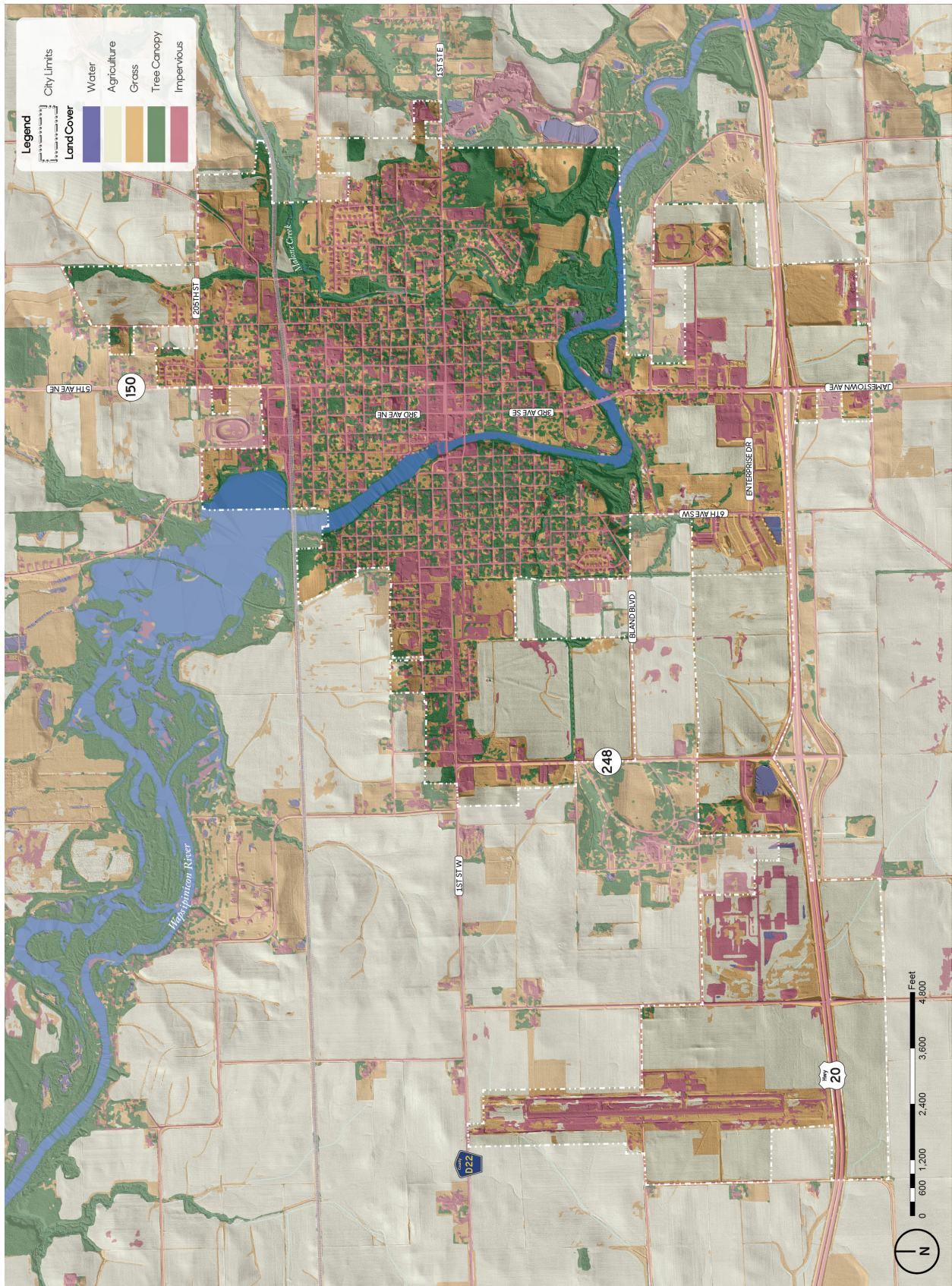
Where is the tree canopy most concentrated?

Look at how much of your community consists of impervious surfaces (e.g., parking lots, roads, buildings) compared to the other surfaces (e.g, water, grass, and agriculture). What does this mean for surface-water movement?

Tree cover affects microclimate. Are places surrounded by canopy more pleasant in the summer? How do these places feel in the winter?

Percent Land Cover Type





Landscape Change Over Time

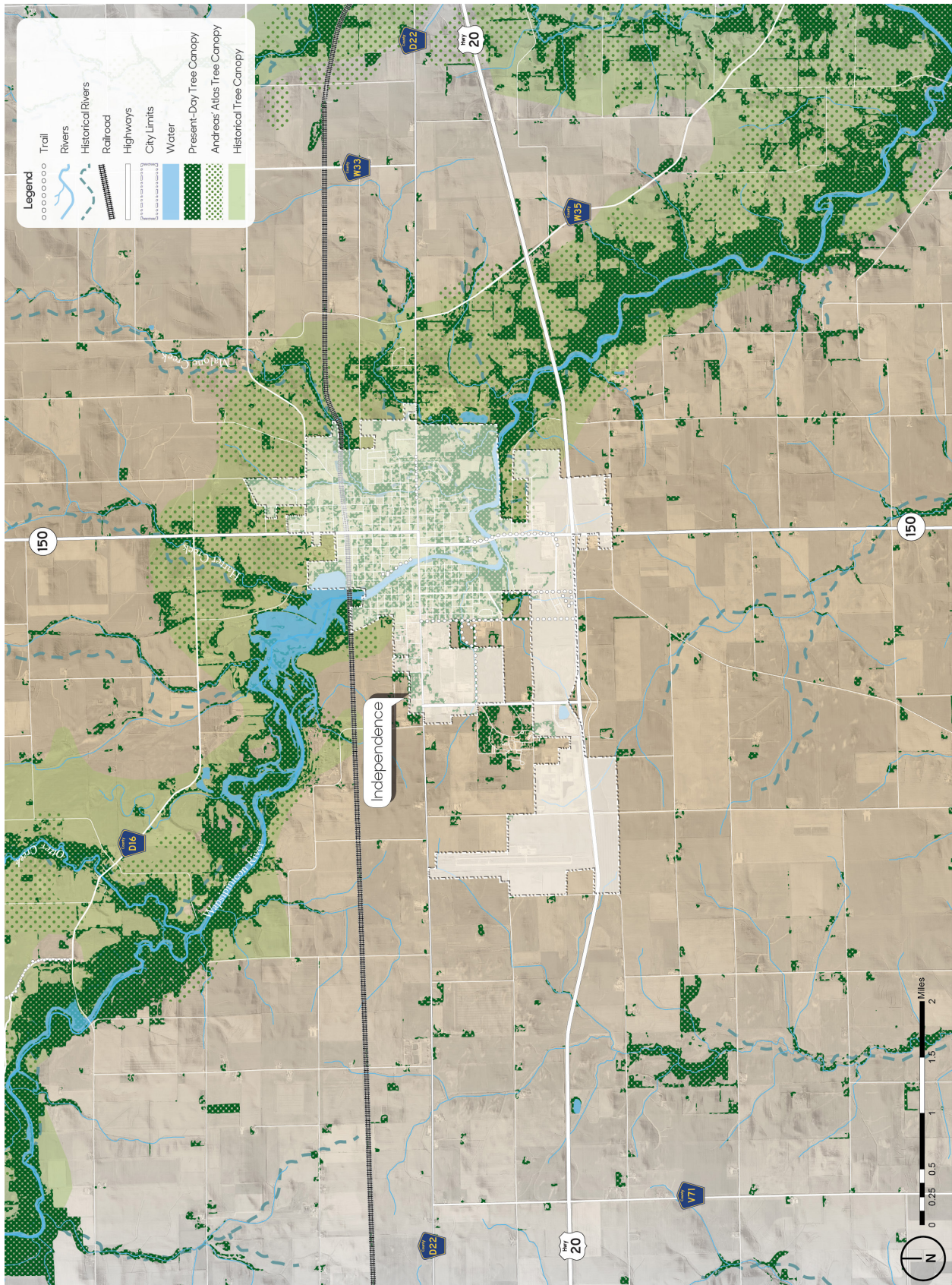
The map on this page shows how the landscape has changed over time, with an emphasis on vegetation and drainageways.¹ The map is helpful for understanding how landscapes change and considering how these changes might affect how well the landscape works to support human and ecological needs.

Trees are invaluable. They clean the air, create shade, and cool the atmosphere. They intercept rainfall and consume groundwater, which helps mitigate stormwater runoff. Carefully chosen and placed trees provide communities identity and residents with a sense of home. In Iowa, a prairie state, we increased tree cover to create shade and a sense of enclosure within rural towns. Lack of natural fires and burning has also generally increased tree cover along rivers and floodplains. Other areas of trees have diminished due to clearing for roads, agriculture, or other purposes.

What changes do you see to the tree canopy surrounding your community? Where has the tree canopy decreased? Where might the tree canopy have increased? Consider what changes to the landscape might have led to the increase or decrease of trees in the region (e.g., farming practices, community development, establishing homesteads and windbreaks, preservation of natural resources).

This map also shows current and historical stream and river corridors. Alterations to waterways such as channelization have been made to increase drainage, but can lead to increased erosion, sediment movement, and flooding where the straightened portion ends. Storm sewers also affect streams and waterways where outfalls drop urban runoff into the corridor, which can dramatically decrease water quality. How have streams and rivers changed? Do these changes appear to be man-made or natural?

1 This map shows the difference between the present day tree canopy gathered from the DNR's Land Cover data and past landscape cover, as defined in the General Land Office (GLO) surveys from 1836 through 1859 and the *A.T. Andreas' Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa from 1875*.



Transportation Assets and Barriers

Overview

Transportation is integral to small-town life and a vibrant economy. In the context of the Community Visioning Program, we recognize walking, biking, and driving as quintessential modes of travel to various destinations important to residents and visitors. Access to these destinations is crucial for many everyday activities—getting to work and school, participating in community events, and providing for basic needs such as food, health care, and healthy activity.

In this participatory assessment, we want to find out which factors and conditions affect transportation use in Independence, where these factors and conditions are most prevalent, and how they influence route and transportation choices locally. Because residents have the best knowledge of how Independence's transportation system works, we use focused, small-group conversations, mapping, and photos of the best and worst to understand local transportation.

Different Users = Different Needs

To capture insights about transportation from a variety of perspectives, we invited Independence residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 36 residents attended Independence's workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the Independence steering committee.



Actives

This user group represents those in the community who engage in outdoor recreation, including cycling, walking, running, swimming, skiing, etc. The availability of multiple venues for outdoor recreation matters to this group.



Mobility
Impaired

This user group is directly affected by accessibility barriers such as high curbing and uneven sidewalks that make it difficult to operate mobility-aiding equipment effectively. Handicapped parking, curb ramps, and smooth surfaces are critical transportation features.



Older Adults

Accessibility—both in terms of physical access and proximity—is a major concern for this user group. Because some people in this user group do not or are unable to drive, having goods and services within walking distance is important.



Youth

This group uses primarily non-motorized modes of transportation, so pedestrian- and bike-friendly streets and sidewalks are important. These users value the ability to get to destinations on foot or via bicycle and having goods and services within walking distance.



Parents

Safety of their children is a primary concern of this user group. Access to safe and easy routes to school activities is another significant factor to this group. Parents of young children desire smooth, wide surfaces for strollers.



Steering
Committee

The common denominator for this user group is that their observations are influenced by special knowledge of the transportation system acquired during the Community Visioning assessment process. As a result, this group is more representative of decision makers.



Historical buildings; wide, new sidewalks; and well maintained streets have made the downtown area a desirable destination.



The concentration of schools along 1st Street creates constant traffic, which, along with the absence of sidewalks, impedes kids' access to school.



The Liberty Trail is well shaded and has minimal traffic noise; it also provides good connections to the high school and road network.



Downtown streets are hard to cross because of high traffic, especially at school pickup and drop-off times.



Teacher's Park has lots of trees, green space, a riverfront view and a handicapped-accessible trail.



Pedestrians have trouble crossing at 1st Street and 5th Avenue, which are both part of Hwy 150, because of heavy traffic; the stoplight creates traffic congestion.

What People Said

"Walking along the river is the best...you take in the nature... and the river's always changing... so it's kind of neat to see..."

"...[Highway]150 does travel through Independence, [so] we get a lot of 18 wheelers...and when they have to do roadwork...they have to divert those semis through neighborhoods...so 6th Avenue during construction basically becomes like a highway..."

"...if there was a safe way to get across town on a bicycle and go more than four miles, I would do that, but we have to go out on the county highways to get exercise..."

"...we just paved...a really nice trail that follows [Highway] 150 south, and we put up that brand-new Independence sign... it looks very nice..."



Actives

"...if people come to visit Independence...[they] pretty much have to get in a vehicle and keep moving from spot to spot. We have some amazing historical locations...but you can't go to...[them] without getting in a vehicle..."

"I'd like to see how the county's trail system can hook into different areas of the town trail system, so that [if] somebody wants to go on a bike ride, [they can] ride a trail from Independence to Brandon or Independence to Winthrop..."

"There [are] areas where there [are] sidewalk and/or trails, and then there [are] areas where there's nothing and people are walking in the street."

"First Street from [5th Avenue SE] all the way out to the school...from 3:15 to 4:00, it's just littered with cars and it takes you 20 minutes to get through town..."



Parents

"[We need] a few bus stops on this side of town for the school to get those kids out to the high school, because not all of those kids drive."

"I just love this trail system that...connects all the schools through the sports complex, and now it comes all the way...to Triangle Park..."

"...when [my family goes] biking, we usually look for a trail...but there [are] none [that we know of]...so we go on the sidewalks [on the east side of town], but then we have to stop because there's a lot of traffic."

"I like...[Liberty Trail]. It's really fun to get out and enjoy the weather...and the squirrels... and it's nicely paved and [has] cool trees."

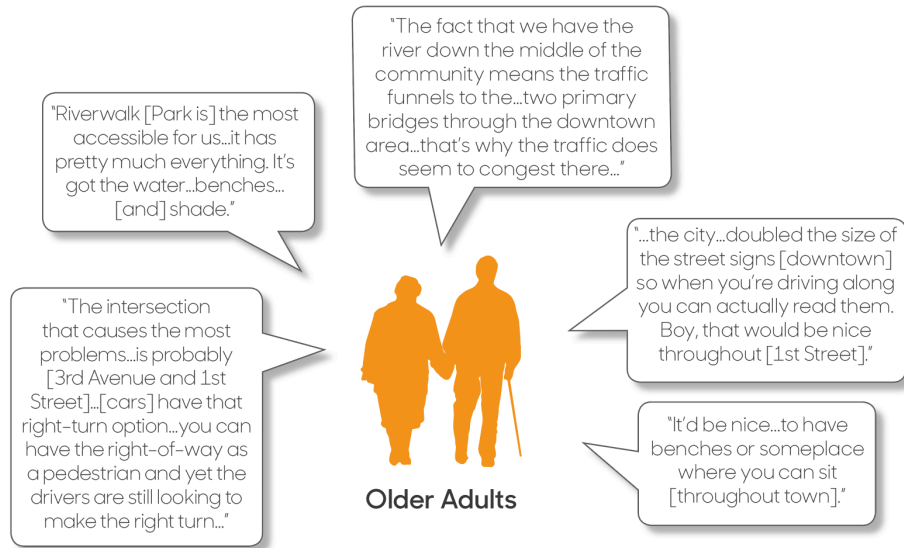
"I think...we should...make [public transportation]... accessible to people [who] don't have any other form of transportation."

"...it's kind of difficult getting out of school [onto 1st Street] because it's just so...cramped..."



Youth

"I'll bike, and then [the sidewalk will] kind of stop, and then I have to go to the other sidewalk on the other side of the street."



Emerging Themes

Discovering themes and consistencies among user groups helps the steering committee to identify solutions to address the needs of all. The chart on the opposite page displays each user group's collective thoughts on particular issues in comparison with the other user groups in the community.

Actives walk, bike, and run for exercise and/or recreation. They enjoy biking along the Amish Highway because it is scenic and doesn't carry much traffic. This group would like better access to the kayak ramp. Actives also want more trees and talked about proactively replacing ash trees.

Mobility-challenged individuals drive and walk to get around. They find that high curbs and tactile pavement on curb cuts are obstacles for people using wheelchairs and walkers. This group mentioned that there is not enough handicapped-accessible parking downtown.

Older adults primarily drive and walk. They would like more trees and landscaping along existing trails, along with better trail access. This group noted that while there is off-street parking downtown, many people don't know about it because there is no signage.

Youth walk, bike, ride the bus, and roller-skate. They enjoy going fishing with their families and swimming at the aquatic center. This group suggested solving the school traffic problem by building a subway system that would end at the school.

Parents drive and walk in town. They are primarily concerned with the safety of their children. This group suggested paving the existing gravel road near the school campus and extending it to 6th Street SW to help alleviate school traffic-flow problems.

Steering committee travel by vehicle, UTV, side-by-side, and golf cart. This group also walks and bikes. Committee members worry that traffic issues on 1st Street will negatively affect businesses along that street. They find large parking lots, such as the lot at the end of the trail in Teacher's Park, to be visually unappealing.

50

Transportation Behaviors and Needs

Overview

The survey provides the visioning steering committee with objective, representative information for the goal-setting phase of community visioning. The quantitative data collected from survey responses complements the qualitative information gathered from the focus groups at the transportation assets and barriers workshop.

The modes of transportation that residents use and the routes they take suggest suitable types of transportation enhancements in these areas. Having a sense for people's willingness to help either financially or with their time is important because many transportation enhancements are funded from multiple sources, including grants, private donations, in-kind contributions, and volunteers. Understanding what types of improvements are important to residents gives the committee insight into how to prioritize projects.

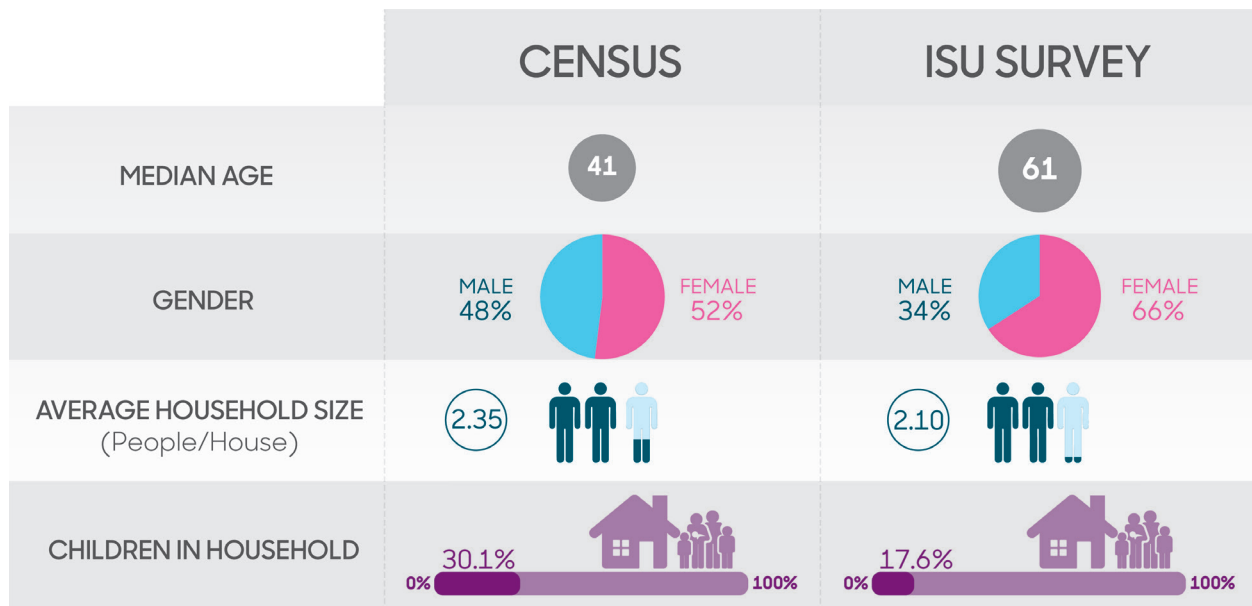
With assistance from Iowa State University's Survey Research Services staff in the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology (CSSM-SRS), ISU visioning program staff conducted a survey to better understand the transportation patterns, behaviors, needs, and desires of Independence residents. Surveys were mailed to 600 randomly selected residents living in Independence and the surrounding area. To increase the response rate, the study was publicized through the local media and follow-up packets were mailed to nonrespondents. With adjustments for ineligible respondents (e.g., incorrect addresses, no longer living in the community), the final sample size was 532. A total of 145 people returned surveys, for a response rate of 35.5%. (A response rate of 20% is considered valid.)

We asked survey recipients what routes they use most often for going to work, walking, and biking. In addition, we asked what qualities and features are important to trail users. We also discovered what residents think is most important in terms of transportation enhancements that address issues such as accessibility, mobility, and safety. Finally, we learned whether or not residents are willing to contribute their time or their financial resources to making enhancements to Independence. This series of boards summarizes the results of the survey as follows:

- Willingness to Help
- Enhancement Priorities
- Commuting Routes
- Walking Routes
- Biking Routes
- Desired Trail Features

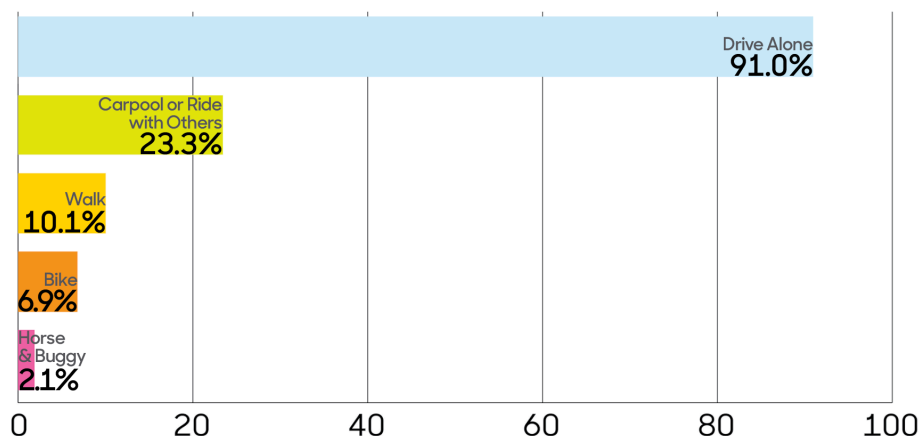
How We Did

The demographics of the respondents are somewhat different from those obtained from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS). For example, the survey respondents median age of 61 is significantly older than the ACS estimated average age for Independence residents of 41. In terms of gender, females are significantly over-represented at 66% of respondents compared to the ACS estimate of 52%. Average household size among survey respondents is somewhat lower than the ACS estimate, and the percentage of households with children among survey responses is significantly lower.



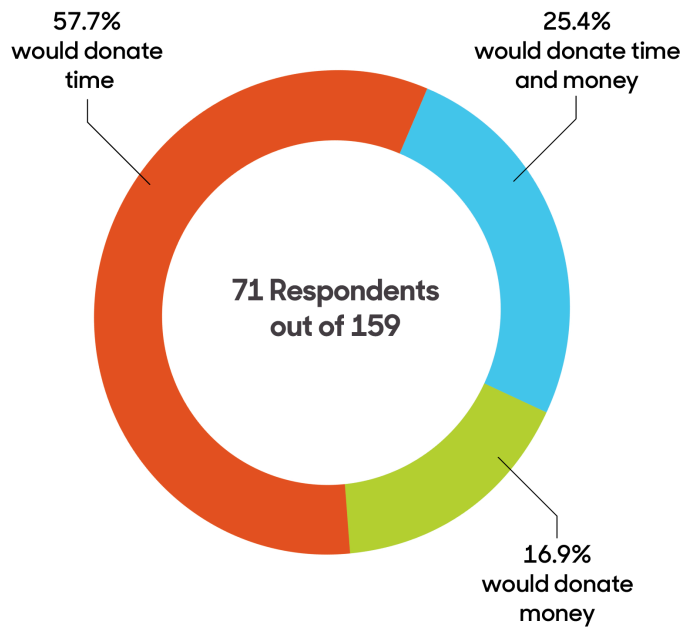
How Independence Residents Travel

Most survey respondents drive to important destinations such as the convenience store, the post office, school, and church (91%). More than 23% carpool or ride with someone else. More than 10% of respondents indicated that they walk and nearly 7% bike. A small percentage of people use horse and buggy for transportation (2.1%).



*Please note that some respondents indicated that they use more than one mode of transportation to get to work; therefore, percentages add up to more than 100%.

Willingness to Help



Most survey participants who answered "Yes" to this question are willing to contribute their time to community improvements (57.7%), while 25.4% would help financially and contribute their time. Nearly 17% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to contribute financially.

Compared to other small towns in Iowa, Independence residents are somewhat more willing to become involved in improving their community. In 2014, on average, 43% of residents in small, rural towns volunteered to help with a community project.¹ Independence exceeds this average by 2%.

How Do You Get People to Help?

Ask, Show, and Advertise Opportunities

In 2014, the most common reason residents in small-town Iowa said they didn't become involved in community projects is that no one asked them (34%). Twenty-eight percent on average said that they don't have time, which is significantly lower than the 2004 average of 59%. Sixteen percent indicated that they didn't know how to become involved, and 7% said that no community project needed volunteers.¹ These results indicate that the best ways to get people involved in community projects is to simply ask, along with advertising opportunities through traditional and social media outlets.

¹ *Sigma: A Profile of Iowa Small Towns 1994 to 2014* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 2015).

Survey Participants Said...



"There needs to be a traffic survey done on 2nd Ave NE to consider putting up some stop signs. Even though this is a farm-to-market road, it is still a residential neighborhood. The Amish won't even go down this road anymore because of the speeding cars..."

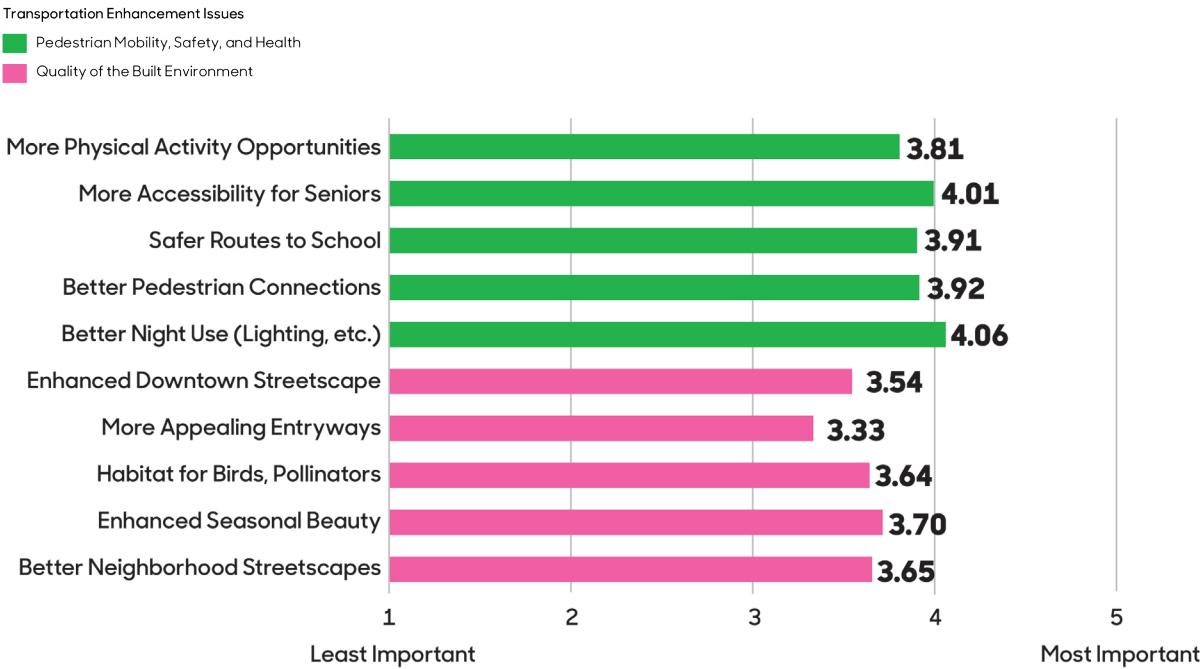
"While maybe not feasible, a public transit route would be nice. The way the town is set up one route with a loop to main destinations could possibly work."



"Independence has done well over the past few years to enhance trail systems and parks...We feel safe walking at all times and enjoy having a variety of areas to explore in town."

Priorities

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, participants in Independence ranked improving night use as most important, with a mean value of 4.06. Other types of transportation enhancements that address pedestrian mobility, health, and safety are also considered significant, including improving accessibility for seniors (4.01), creating better pedestrian connections (3.92), developing safer routes to school (3.91), and creating more opportunities for physical activities (3.81). In terms of quality of the built environment, survey respondents consider enhancing seasonal beauty as most important (3.70), followed by improving neighborhood streetscapes (3.65), and creating habitat for birds and pollinators (3.64). These findings are consistent with the views expressed by focus group participants during the Transportation Assets and Barriers workshop held in February 2023.



Survey Participants Said...



"I would walk more at night if the paths had more lights."

"I wish there were more light for night walking and more chairs/seats for the elderly...[we need] spots to throw dogs' waste; lots [of people] walk their dogs in town."



"[There is] much need to help handicapped/disabled to have better access to parks and walking trails."

"There needs to be better dedicated access for pedestrians and bikes across the railroad tracks and across the downtown bridges."



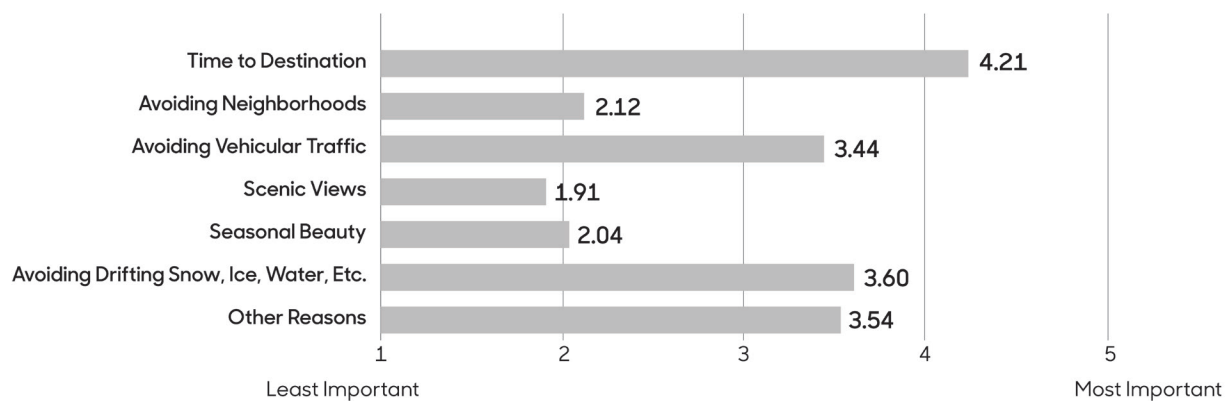
Commuting Routes

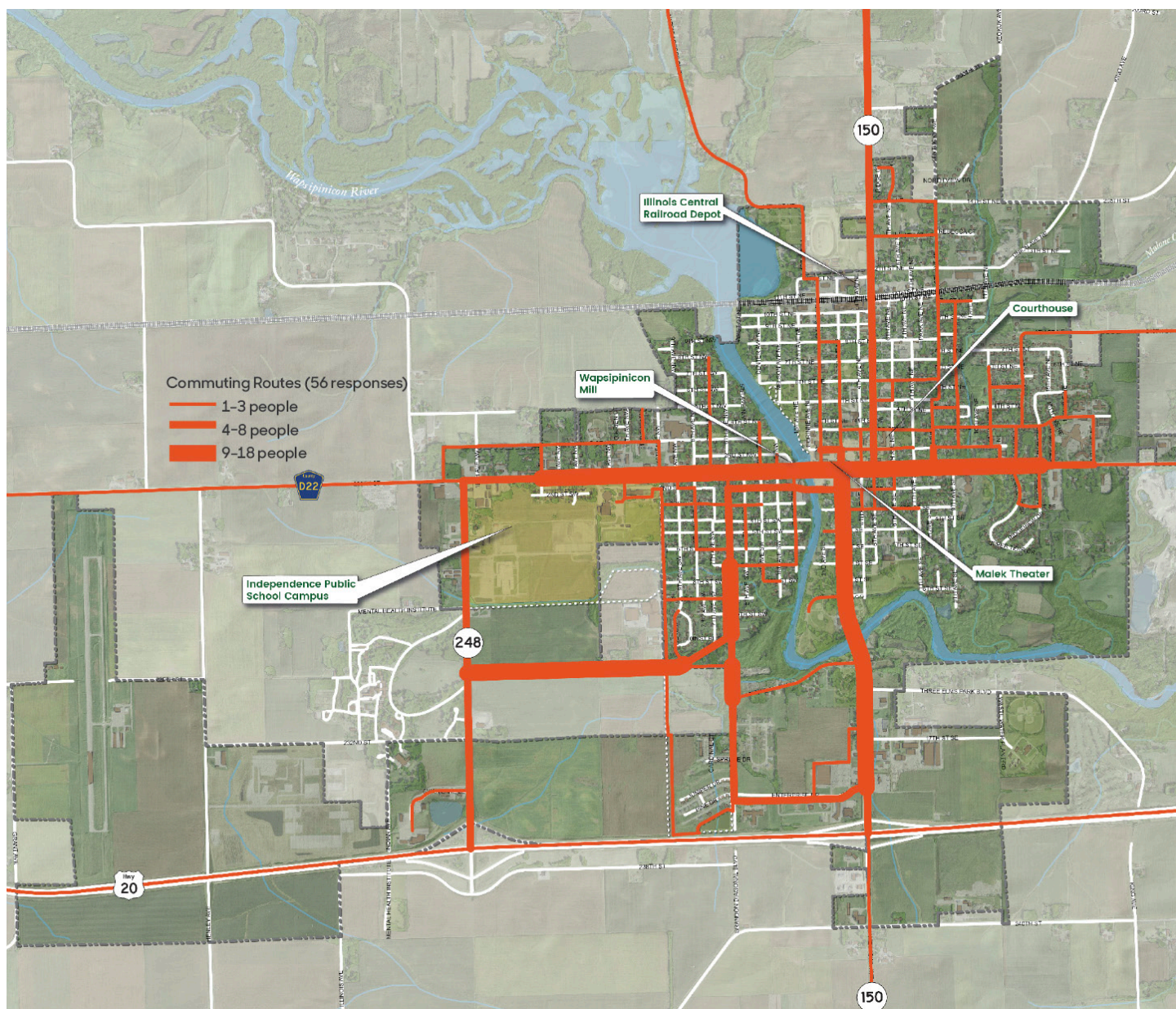
This map shows the commuting routes identified by 56 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their width, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. The primary east-west commuting corridor into and out of Independence is County Road D22/1st Street, and Highway 150 is the major north-south route. The most heavily used corridors in town are 1st Street, 5th Avenue NE, 3rd Avenue SE to US 20, Bland Boulevard, and Iowa Avenue, which also connects to US 20.

The circulation patterns that emerge when routes for biking, walking, and commuting are overlaid suggest suitable types of transportation enhancements. For example, where pedestrian and vehicular traffic intersect, such improvements could include creating better visibility, defining crossing points, or improving signage.

Why They Go That Way

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that factored into their choice of commuting route. Among Independence participants, time to destination is the most important factor in determining commuting routes, with a mean value of 4.21. Avoiding weather-related issues such as snow and ice is also somewhat important (3.60), as well as other reasons—which include avoiding stoplights, availability of gas, and taking the most direct route (3.54)—and avoiding vehicular traffic (3.44). Scenic views, seasonal beauty, and avoiding neighborhoods are not critical factors in determining commuting routes.





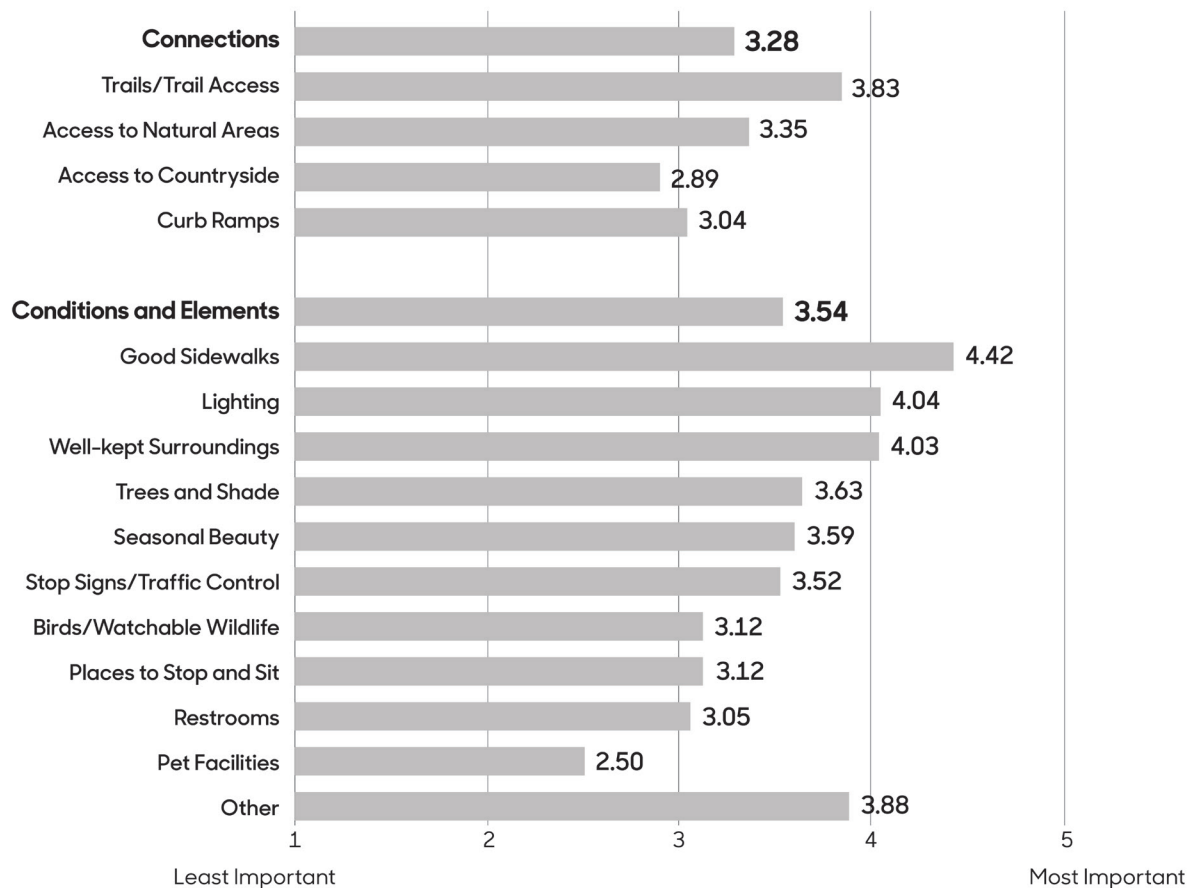
Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislibx/>.

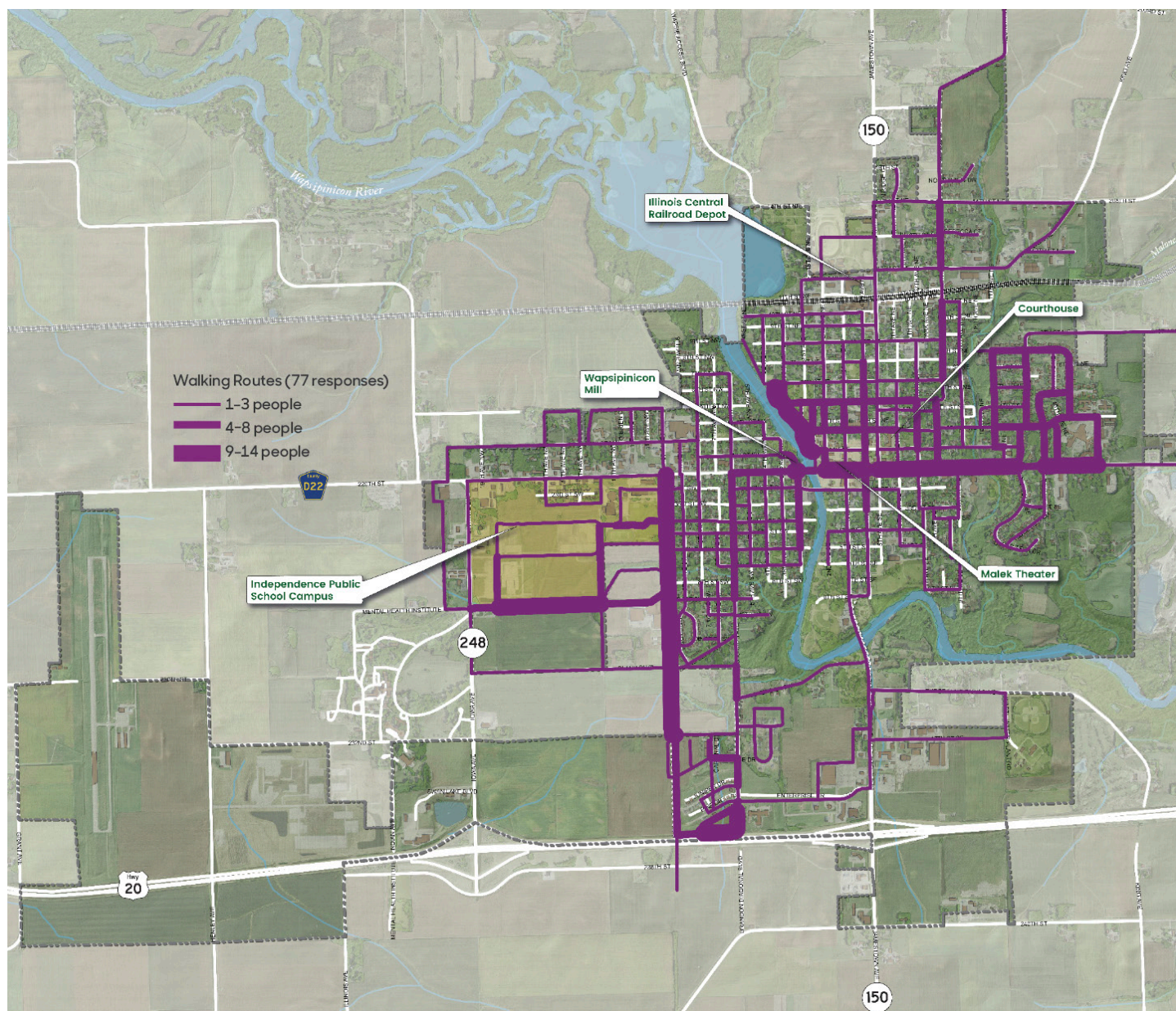
Walking Routes

This map shows the walking routes identified by 77 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their width, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. Riverwalk Trail, Liberty Trail, Triangle Park Trail, and the trail by the hospital are popular walking venues among survey respondents. Streets in town frequented by walkers include 1st Street from the river east to the hospital, portions of 8th Avenue NE, 6th Avenue SW, streets connecting to River Walk Trail from the east, and the residential streets northwest of the hospital.

Why They Go That Way

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their walking experience better. These features are categorized as either "connections" or "conditions and elements." Independence participants consider conditions/elements more important than connections, with mean values of 3.54 and 3.28, respectively. In terms of connections, access to trails is most important with a mean value of 3.83. Good sidewalks (4.42) are the most important condition/element to walkers, followed by lighting (4.04) and well-kept surroundings (4.03), and other factors, including sidewalk or trail surface, low traffic, views of community activity, proximity to destinations (3.88).





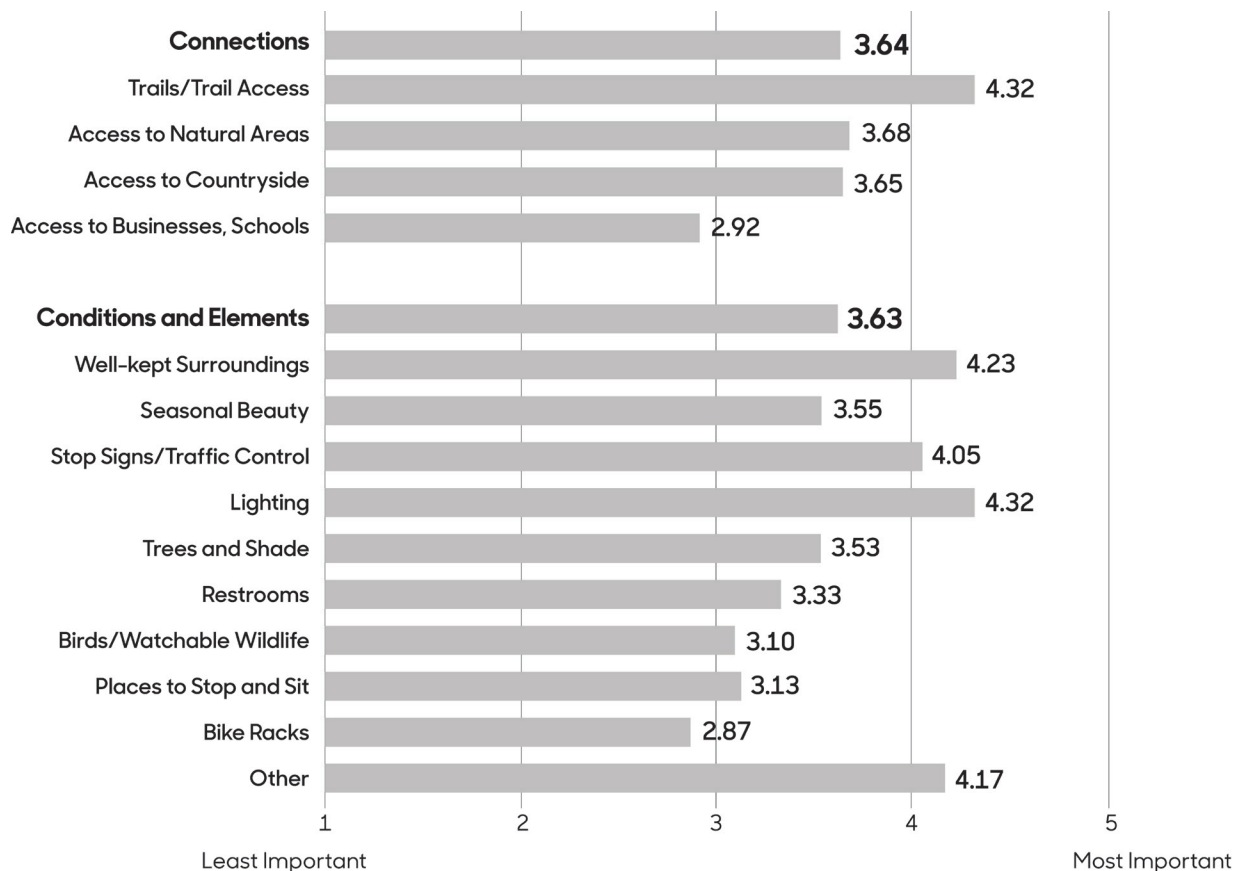
Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislibx/>.

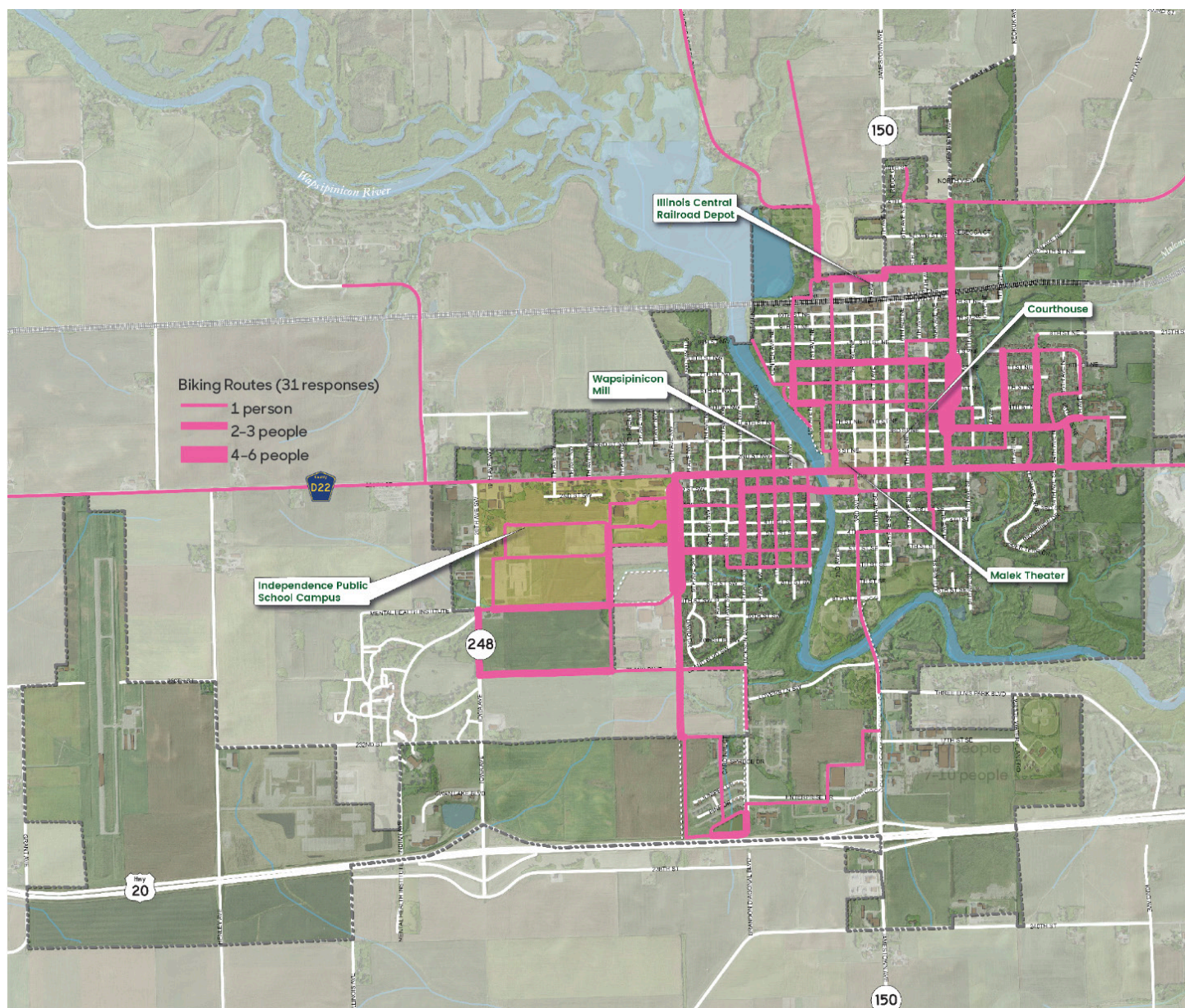
Biking Routes

This map shows the biking routes identified by 31 survey respondents. The frequency that the routes are used is depicted by their width, with most frequently used routes being the thickest. Bikers most often use Liberty Trail, as well as the Triangle Park Trail and the trail by the hospital, although to a lesser extent. Popular city streets for biking include 1st Street, portions of 8th Avenue NE, and 7th Street NE and 5th Street NE, presumably to access River Walk Trail. Some people bike out of town along County Road D22 and 205th Street to the east.

Why They Go That Way

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their biking experience better. These features are categorized as either "connections" or "conditions and elements." Independence participants consider connections and conditions/elements almost equally important, with mean values of 3.64 and 3.63, respectively. Access to trails is most important connection to survey respondents with a mean value of 4.32. In terms of conditions/elements, lighting (4.32) is the most important among bikers, followed by well-kept surroundings (4.23) and other factors, which include traffic volume, trail/lane width, and clean surfaces (4.17). Stop signs/traffic control (4.05), seasonal beauty (3.55), and trees and shade (3.53) are also significant elements.

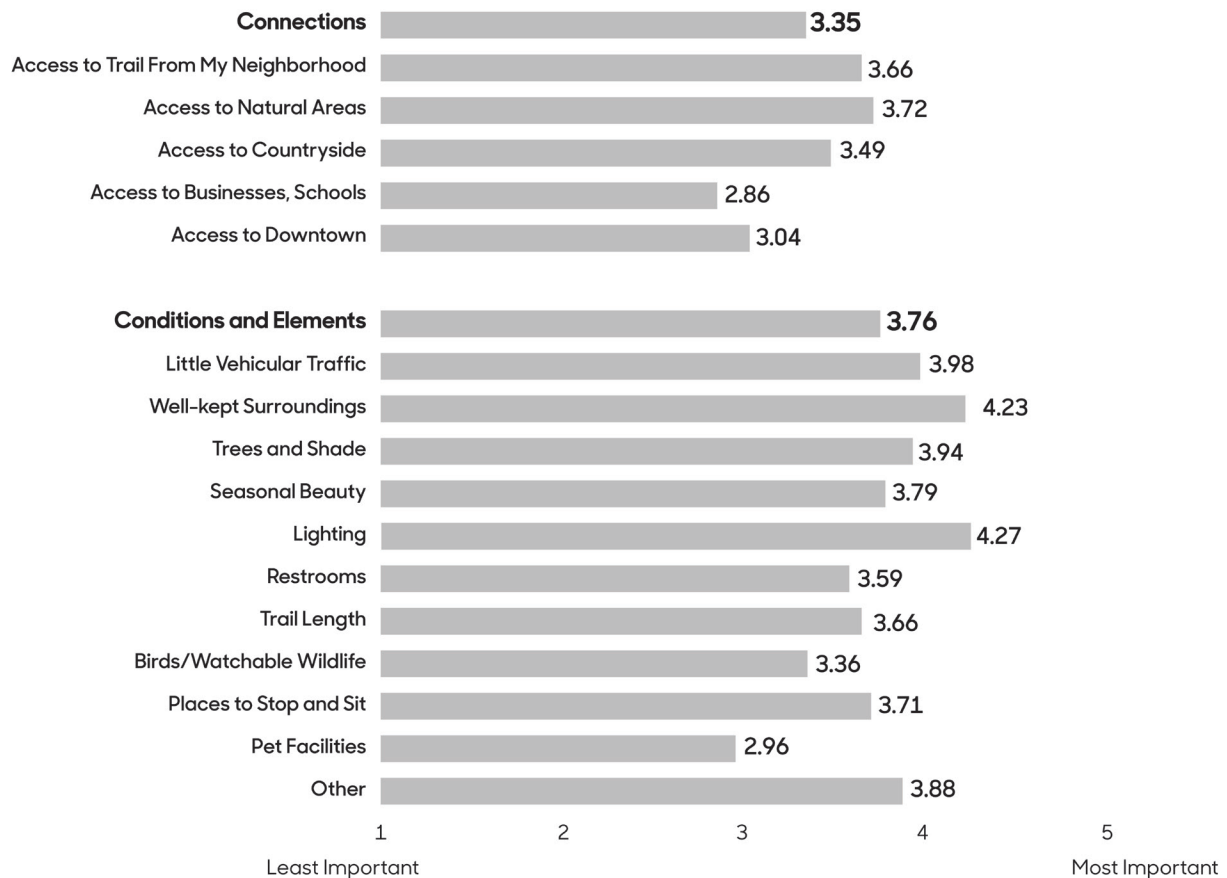




Map Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, "Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems Library," <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislibx/>.

Desired Trail Features

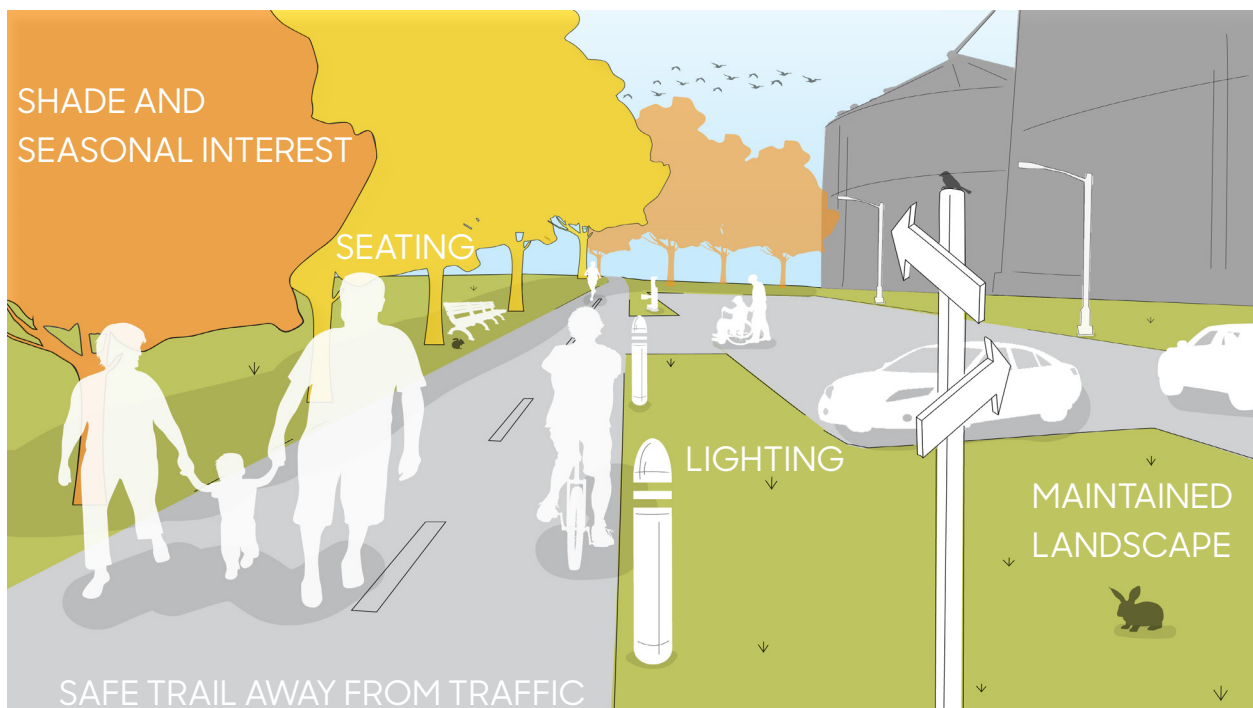
Trails are off-street paths that are paved or unpaved and can be used by pedestrians and cyclists. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, survey participants ranked the characteristics and features that made their trail experience better. Like the bike route features, they are categorized as either “connections” or “conditions and elements.” Conditions/elements are more important to Independence trail users than connections, with mean values of 3.76 and 3.35, respectively. Access to natural areas is most the important connection among trail users, with a mean value of 3.72. In terms of conditions/elements, lighting (4.27) is most important, followed by well-kept surroundings (4.23). Little vehicular traffic (3.98), trees and shade (3.94), and other factors (3.88)—including trail surface, proximity to parking, multiple access points, and the availability of trail maps—are also significant for trail users.





"I would like all trails connected. For example, the trail on the east side of the river is great, but too short. I want to walk and/or bike in natural areas—not downtown."

"Liberty Trail could use better lighting other than in proximity of the schools after dark. (It is a great trail.)"



Transportation Inventory and Analysis

Knowledge of the transportation systems in and around a community is critical for sustainable transportation enhancement planning. Independence's transportation system includes roadways, sidewalks, and an active railroad.

The Independence visioning design team met with the local officials to identify existing, past, and future transportation system capital improvements, maintenance activities and issues, and other transportation-related constraints and opportunities in the area.

"Historic Highway 20" is a common phrase heard when discussing anything related to transportation in Independence. Rerouted to the south of the community, it previously ran straight through the heart of Independence. 1st Street is still a major thoroughfare for Independence, carrying between 5,000–8,400 vehicles per day (Iowa Department of Transportation 2021 Daily Traffic County). In addition to vehicle volume, Independence Elementary and Middle School drop-off is located off 1st Street W, creating traffic issues that resulted in several businesses relocating to other areas of town.

The Wapsipinicon River bisects Independence with only two bridges crossing in the center of the community resulting in traffic congestion. Traffic lights along 1st Street add to the issue, with cars lined up over the course of 12 to 15 blocks during school drop-off and pick-up times.

The relocated businesses and new development are in the south side of town, along Iowa Highway 150 creating new traffic issues. Congestion and visibility were complaints in the area between Enterprise Drive and Lover's Lane. A TEAP study on Iowa Highway 150 completed in 2021 made a long-term recommendation to convert this section from a traditional two-lane road to a three-lane road with a two-way left turning lane in the center.

The main thoroughfares through the community allow easy access to Highway 20, Iowa Highways 150 and 248, and County Road D22; have bridge access across the river; and connect to the main destinations of the community. However, this configuration results in those same areas being problems for the community with congestion, visibility problems, unsafe intersections, and pedestrian access issues.

Independence has been developing trails throughout the community that connect the schools, the commercial development area, many of the community's parks, and other popular destinations. Future trail extensions are desired to connect to the sports complex on the southeast side of town and to create a connection on the north side of 1st Street W to the north side of the community.



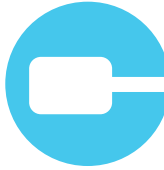
What, Where, & Why

The What, Where, and Why meeting is a critical component in the development of a successful project. Setting and prioritizing goals allows the design team to focus its efforts and resources more effectively to help the community develop a vision for Independence based on its goals.

The design team met with the Independence steering committee to discuss its goals. The steering committee presented its takeaways from previous discussions about the transportation assets and barriers, transportation analysis, and bioregional information.

Using the nominal group method to organize the meeting and discussion, the committee identified goals and values based on information from the assessments. Each committee member also included reasoning for improvements around town and highlighted specific programming needs for areas of improvement. These objectives and desired improvements were recorded during an open discussion. Each idea was listed and then like items were categorized into specific themes.

The design team organized programming themes for the city of Independence using the goals and desired improvements identified by the steering committee during the discussion, giving greater weight to those goals receiving more votes and common ideas presented multiple times. The following chart reflects a representation of the outcomes of the goal-setting process.

Community Themes/Issues Based on Assessments	Broad-based Outcomes/Goals	Why Change Anything?	What Exactly & Where?
1st Street W Improvements 	- Green space/landscaped pedestrian areas with benches to rest - Improve overall appearance of city - Improve safety for those walking or using bikes in the area - Add interpretive signage with historical information - Remove some pavement and hardscapes - Add drainage area, grasses, and trees - Improve existing sidewalks - Create an entryway to the west side that is appealing to traffic and pedestrians - Revitalize the business corridor by first improving the aesthetics - Relocate/remove deteriorating buildings - Create destinations on 1st Street W	- Safer for kids and families to walk along - Create more accessibility - Add beautification to corridor - Enhance appearance and aesthetics - West side has missing sidewalks - Improve transportation for people traveling to work - Recreational use - Control drainage, runoff, and flooding - Area looks dreary - Historic town - Draw people to town - Currently gives a poor view of town - Currently shows a lack of city pride - Bring traffic toward existing businesses - Attract new businesses - Stimulate development of community	- Bioretention cells for storm water east of Early Childhood Center - Add sidewalks on north side of 1st Street W across from school campuses - Connect sidewalks throughout town - Add trees and landscaping - Add new sidewalks on the west side of town near Subway - Benches on trails - Keep nostalgia everywhere - Add sidewalks across from Early Childhood Center - West end of Independence add sidewalks, benches, art, etc. - Pocket parks, possibly near old A&W - Visitors center; use empty buildings - Add sidewalks west of Spahn & Rose on 1st Street W
Trail Connections 	- Increase recreational use of trails - Improve safety - Connection to trails throughout Independence - Get grants for trails - Increase lighting along trails - Add benches and rest areas along trails - Add different amenities throughout the trail system	- Complete trail loop by connecting all existing trails within the community - Expand recreation opportunities for community members - Provide an additional means of transportation - Lighting is needed	- Improve lighting for safer use during evenings and early morning - Connect Liberty Trail to Hwy 150 - Connect trail to pool - Connect Mental Health Institute to schools - Pave trail from Triangle Park (where Liberty Trail ends) to Hwy 150 - Create trail from Enterprise Drive to Liberty Trail - Add amenities around new courthouse building and adjacent buildings
Signage 	- Provide way-finding signage throughout Independence - Add new park names to signage - Signage on trails - Signage on buildings	- Increase traffic to businesses - Ease of use navigating Independence - Informational for residents and visitors	- Provide signage at trail locations - Add signage to 1st Street - Include signage on the main roads - Add emergency markers on the trails

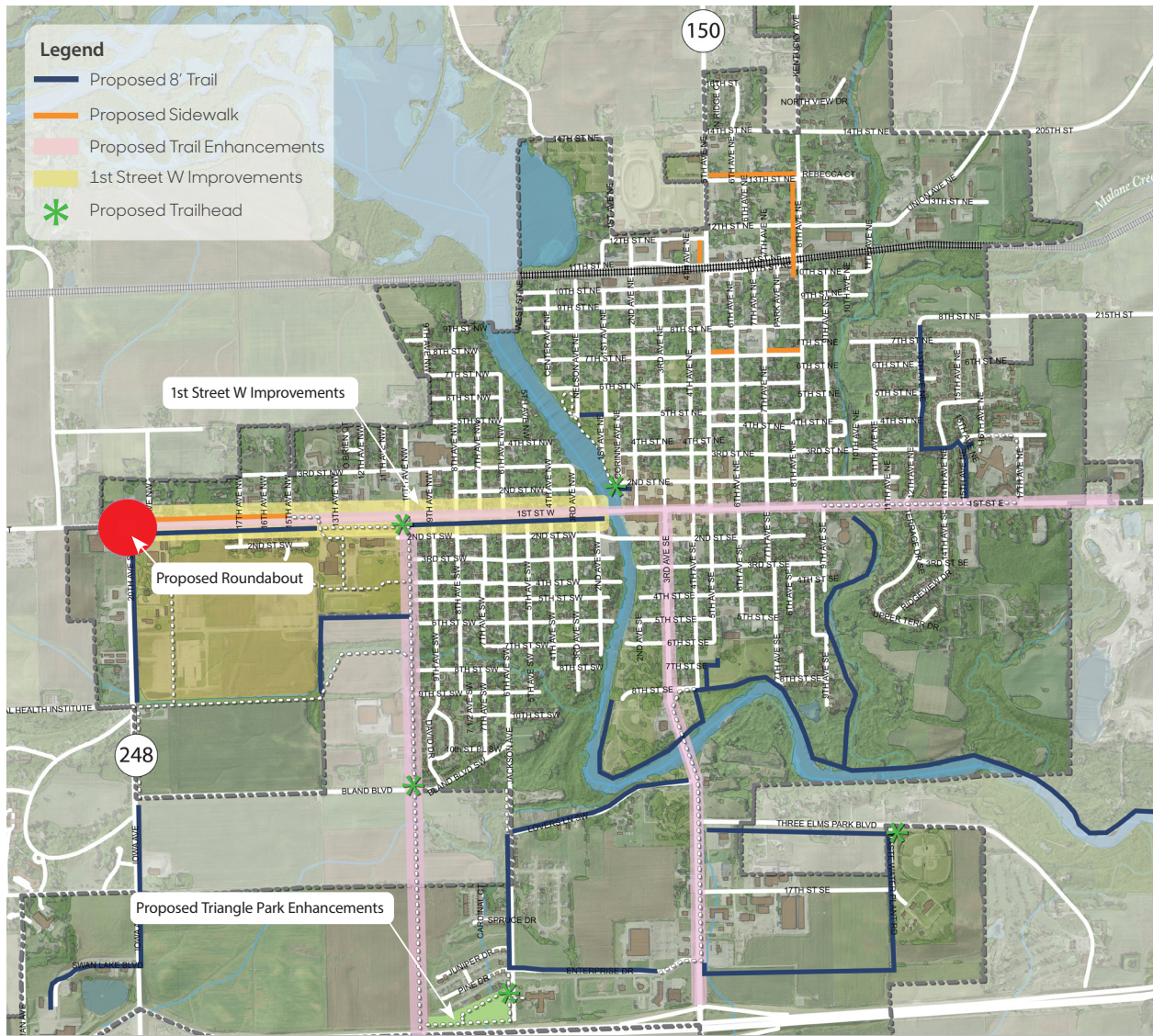
Community Concept Plan

During the Design Workshop Open House, residents were encouraged to come learn about the Community Visioning process, review the analysis that had been done, and give input on design concepts that were guided by the steering committee. Residents had an opportunity to review all the analysis boards provided by Iowa State University, interact with the design team, and leave feedback on the projects. The open house was an essential part of the process for the design team to better understand and finalize conceptual ideas based on the community's desires.

1st Street W improvements focus on safety, drainage issues, aesthetics, and amenities. During the Design Workshop, residents were able to manipulate a streetscape model that showed different elements such as lawn areas, trees, trails, sidewalks, and bioretention areas. Residents used Wikki Stix to show alternative routes that would alleviate congestion on 1st Street W. The design team used input from both exercises to shape the conceptual design of 1st Street W.

Residents of all ages expressed interest in creating more trail and sidewalk connections throughout Independence. Workshop participants had the opportunity to draw the routes they frequent or wish to utilize safely. From this activity, the design team was able to prioritize new sidewalk connections and the desired routes for walking trails. Community members also showed an interest in adding amenities to all the trails throughout Independence.

Using the existing Independence logo, adding additional way-finding signage throughout Independence can help residents and visitors find destinations in town such as Liberty Trail or Riverwalk Park. Additionally, signage can help with "branding" of the community and create a cohesive palette for signage.



Proposed Design Concepts in Independence

1st Street W Corridor

1st Street W is a major thoroughfare for Independence, carrying between 5,000 to 8,400 vehicles per day (Iowa Department of Transportation 2021 Daily Traffic County). As you enter Independence from the west, there is no welcome signage. You are greeted with vacant buildings, very little green space or trees and a lot of concrete. The Independence Elementary and Middle Schools are located along 1st Street W and create traffic issues throughout the day, especially during drop off and dismissal times.

During the What, Where, Why meeting, the steering committee prioritized improving the aesthetics and addressing safety and traffic issues along this important corridor. The intersection of Iowa Avenue and 1st Street W is a prime location for a single-lane roundabout that would improve traffic flow and safety. The center of the roundabout would include entrance signage, decorative brick paving and low-growing plant materials, creating an inviting entrance feature as you enter Independence from the west and south. Independence lacks uniform streetscape furniture. The steering committee suggested a palette of furniture that fits the historical nature of the community. The proposed streetlight was chosen by the committee because it is a cross between two of their existing streetlights and continues the historical/period theme. This palette could be used throughout Independence and begin to unify the improvements to the community.

The north side of 1st Street W has major electrical lines in the right-of-way; the design team is suggesting ornamental trees to soften the appearance of these lines and aid in the overall aesthetics. The south side of the road would accommodate overstory tree plantings. The design team suggested locations for tree plantings that would not impact existing business signage or building facades along this corridor.

8a



Legend

- Overstory Tree
- Understory Tree
- Proposed Entrance Signs
- Proposed Roundabout
- Proposed Parking Lot Realignment
- Proposed Sidewalk

1st Street W Corridor

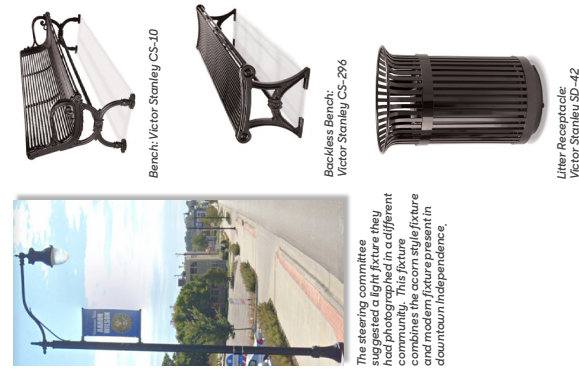
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Streetscape Furniture Palette



Bench: Victor Stanley CS-10

Backless Bench: Victor Stanley CS-296

Litter Receptacle: Victor Stanley SD-42

Independence

1st Street W Corridor

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects
Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA
Intern: Andree Fager, Iowa State University
Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



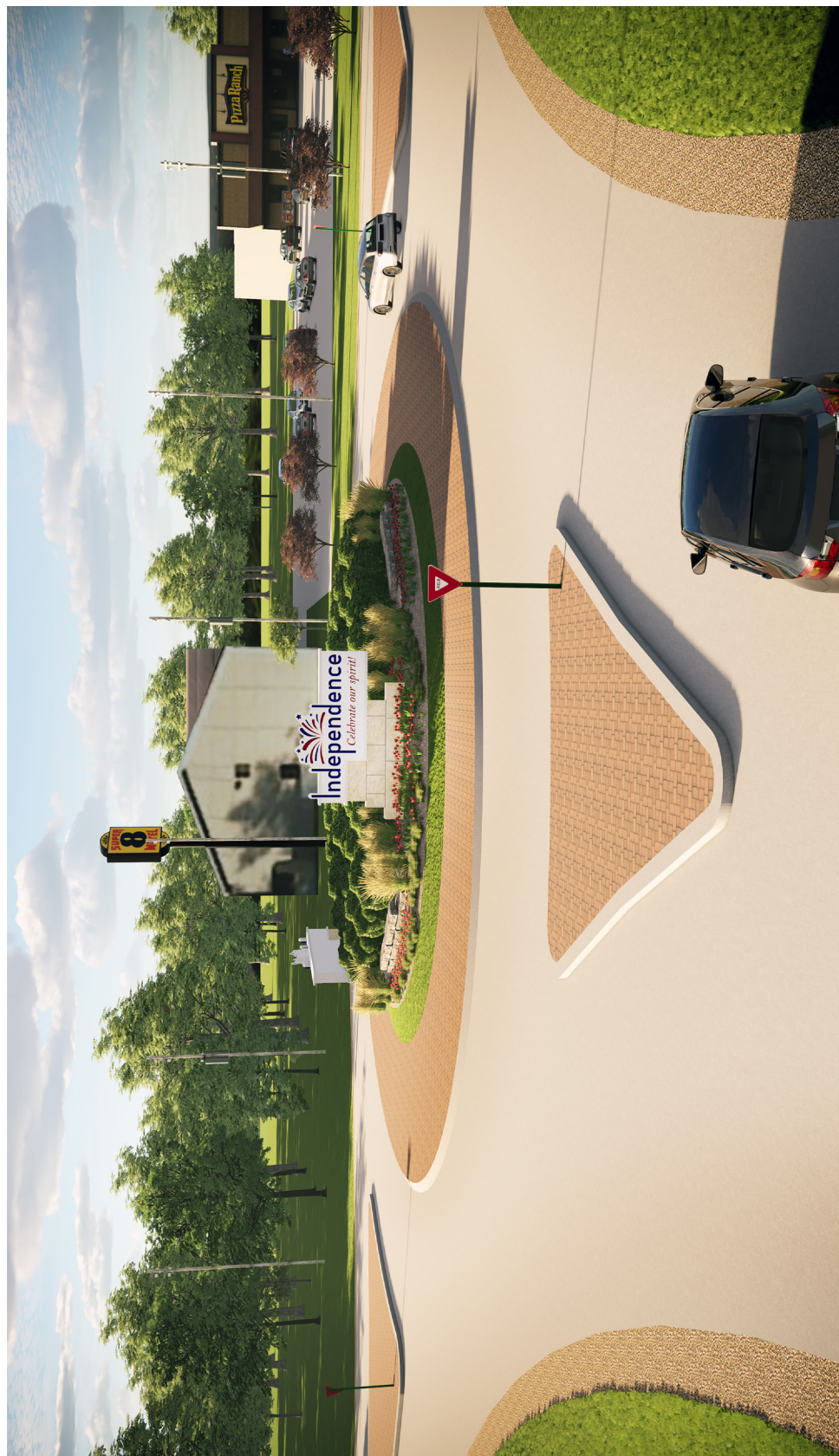
1st Street W Corridor – Opinion of Probable Cost

The following cost opinion is based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimated and a site survey should be conducted prior to implementation to verify quantities shown in the cost opinion. A signage study will determine quantity, type and locations of signage along this corridor.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

CY = cubic yard SF= square feet EA = each LS = Lump Sum
TBD = to be determined SY= square yard

1st Street W Corridor	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	TBD		
Temporary Erosion Control	1	TBD		
Temporary Utilities	1	TBD		
Site Grading	1	TBD		
Demolition				
Excavation	667	CY	\$14.00	\$9,333.33
Roundabout				
Roundabout	1	TBD		
Pavement				
4" Paved Sidewalk	2,222	SY	\$70.00	\$155,555.56
ADA Curb Ramps with Warning Panels	12	EA	\$850.00	\$10,200.00
Plantings & Seeding				
Lawn Seeding (2' Each Side of Sidewalk)	20,000	SF	\$0.25	\$5,000.00
Overstory Trees - 2" Caliper	26	EA	\$500.00	\$13,000.00
Understory Trees - 1" Caliper	24	EA	\$350.00	\$8,400.00
Bioretention Area (See Cost Estimate on Page 52)				
Bioretention Area	1	LS	\$267,621.67	\$267,621.67
Amenities (a la carte)				
Interpretive Signage	2	EA	\$750.00	\$1,500.00
Pedestrian Way-finding Signage	2	EA	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
Way-finding Signage	2	EA	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
Victor Stanley CS-10 Bench (4')	1	EA	\$1,916.00	\$1,916.00
Victor Stanley CS-10 Bench (6')	1	EA	\$2,047.00	\$2,047.00
Victor Stanley CS-296 Backless Bench (4')	1	EA	\$1,632.00	\$1,632.00
Victor Stanley CS-296 Backless Bench (6')	1	EA	\$1,832.00	\$1,832.00
Victor Stanley SD-42 Trash Receptacle	1	EA	\$1,515.00	\$1,515.00
			Subtotal	\$475,526.56
			Contingency (10%)	\$47,552.66
			Mobilization (15%)	\$71,328.98
			Design/Engineering (15%)	\$71,328.98
			TOTAL	\$665,737.18



Proposed roundabout at intersection of Iowa Avenue and 1st Street W

1st Street Corridor W

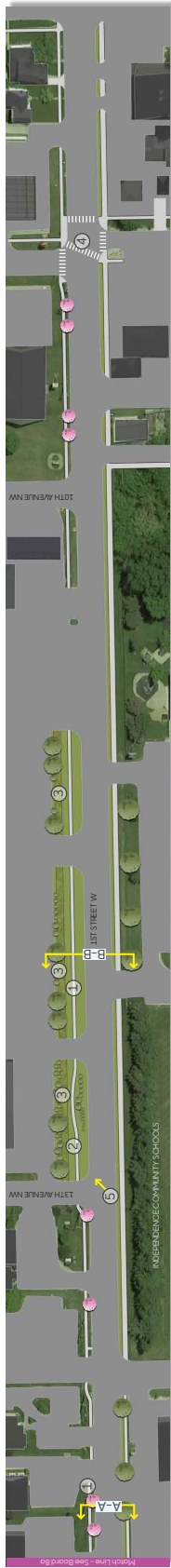
A portion of the parking lot between 13th Avenue NW and 10th Avenue NW, could be converted to green space with bioretention cells, plantings, sidewalk, and benches. The steering committee is working with Buchanan County and private landowners to break up the "sea of concrete," as one steering committee member described it.

The bioretention cells could help alleviate some of the flooding issues along 1st Street W caused by the large amount of paved surfacing. In addition, the proximity to the schools creates a great opportunity for learning about bioretention areas. The design team recommends installing signage explaining the value of this best management practice for handling stormwater.

Substantial electrical lines run along the north side of 1st Street W. The design team is recommending ornamental trees along most of the north side of 1st Street W and overstory trees set back from the electrical lines in the proposed green space section.

10th Avenue NW to 2nd Ave NW will be reconstructed in 2024 and will include an 8-foot trail along the south side of 1st Street W.

8b



Existing Conditions at 1st Street W & 13th Ave NW



Proposed Improvements



The proposed 30 feet of additional green space allows for both overstory and ornamental tree plantings, bioretention cells, sidewalk, benches, and lawn.

- ① Proposed Sidewalk
- ② Proposed Green Space
- ③ Proposed Bioretention Cells
- ④ Existing Highly-visible Crosswalk
- ⑤ Direction of view for existing conditions and proposed improvements eduts shown on the right

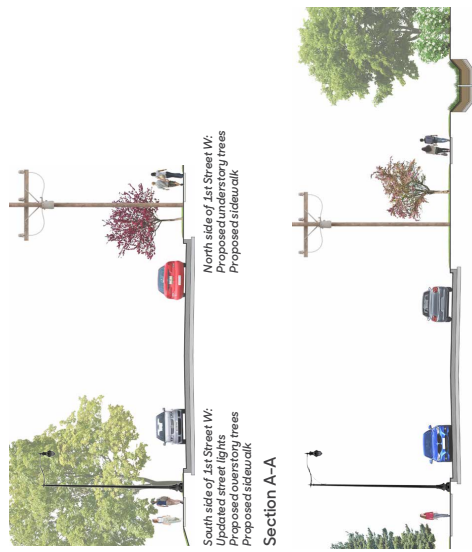
1st Street W Corridor

A portion of the parking lot between 13th Avenue NW and 10th Avenue NW, could be converted to green space with bioretention cells, plantings, sidewalk, and benches. The steering committee is working with Buchanan County and private landowners to break up the 'sea of concrete,' as one steering committee member described it.

The bioretention cells could help alleviate some of the flooding issues along 1st Street W caused by the large amount of paved surfacing. In addition, the proximity to the schools creates a great opportunity for learning about bioretention areas. The design team recommends installing signage explaining the value of this best management practice for handling stormwater.

Substantial electrical lines run along the north side of 1st Street W. The design team is recommending ornamental trees along most of the north side of 1st Street W and overstory trees set back from the electrical lines in the proposed green space section.

10th Avenue NW to 2nd Ave NW will be reconstructed in 2024 and will include an 8-foot trail along the south side of 1st Street W.



South side of 1st Street W:
Updated streetlights
Proposed overstory trees
Proposed sidewalk

North side of 1st Street W:
Proposed overstory trees
Proposed understorey trees
Proposed sidewalk

Section A-A

Section B-B

Independence 1st Street W Corridor

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects
Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA
Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University
Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



1st Street W Corridor- Opinion of Probable Cost

The following cost opinions are based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. A site survey should be conducted to verify quantities. A soils test should be completed to determine the bioretention area soil type and design to determine stormwater runoff capabilities.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

EA = each LS = lump sum CY = cubic yards SY = square yards

SF = square foot

1st Street W Corridor - Bioretention Area				
	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Temporary Erosion Control	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Temporary Utilities	1	LS	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
Site Grading	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Demolition				
Pavement Removal	1,433	SY	\$15.00	\$21,500.00
Excavation	956	CY	\$14.00	\$13,377.78
Pavement				
8' Paved Trail with 6" Granular Subbase	382	SY	\$70.00	\$26,755.56
ADA Curb Ramps with Warning Panels	6	EA	\$850.00	\$5,100.00
Plantings & Seeding				
Lawn Seeding	4,300	SF	\$0.25	\$1,075.00
Overstory Trees - 2" Caliper	8	EA	\$500.00	\$4,000.00
Understory Trees - 1" Caliper	12	EA	\$350.00	\$4,200.00
Shrubs	40	EA	\$60.00	\$2,400.00
Bioretention Area				
Amended Soils	4,000	SF	\$18.25	\$73,000.00
Bioretention Plantings	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Amenities (a la carte)				
Interpretive Signage	1	EA	\$750.00	\$750.00
Pedestrian Way-finding Signage	1	EA	\$500.00	\$500.00
Benches	3	EA	\$2,000.00	\$6,000.00
Subtotal				\$191,158.33
Contingency (10%)				\$19,115.83
Mobilization (15%)				\$28,673.75
Design/Engineering (15%)				\$28,673.75
TOTAL				\$267,621.67

Design Expertise Recommended

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the Independence visioning committee or available city staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect and civil engineer.



Proposed bioretention area with trail, signage and plantings.

Trail Connections

Connectivity Plan & Trail Improvements

The existing trails and sidewalks in Independence are not connected, which is an issue for many residents. Improving trail amenities and connectivity was mentioned many times during the focus groups and design workshop. One resident mentioned, "There [are] areas where there [are] sidewalk and/or trails, and then there [are] areas where there's nothing and people are walking in the street," (re: What People Said, 3b).

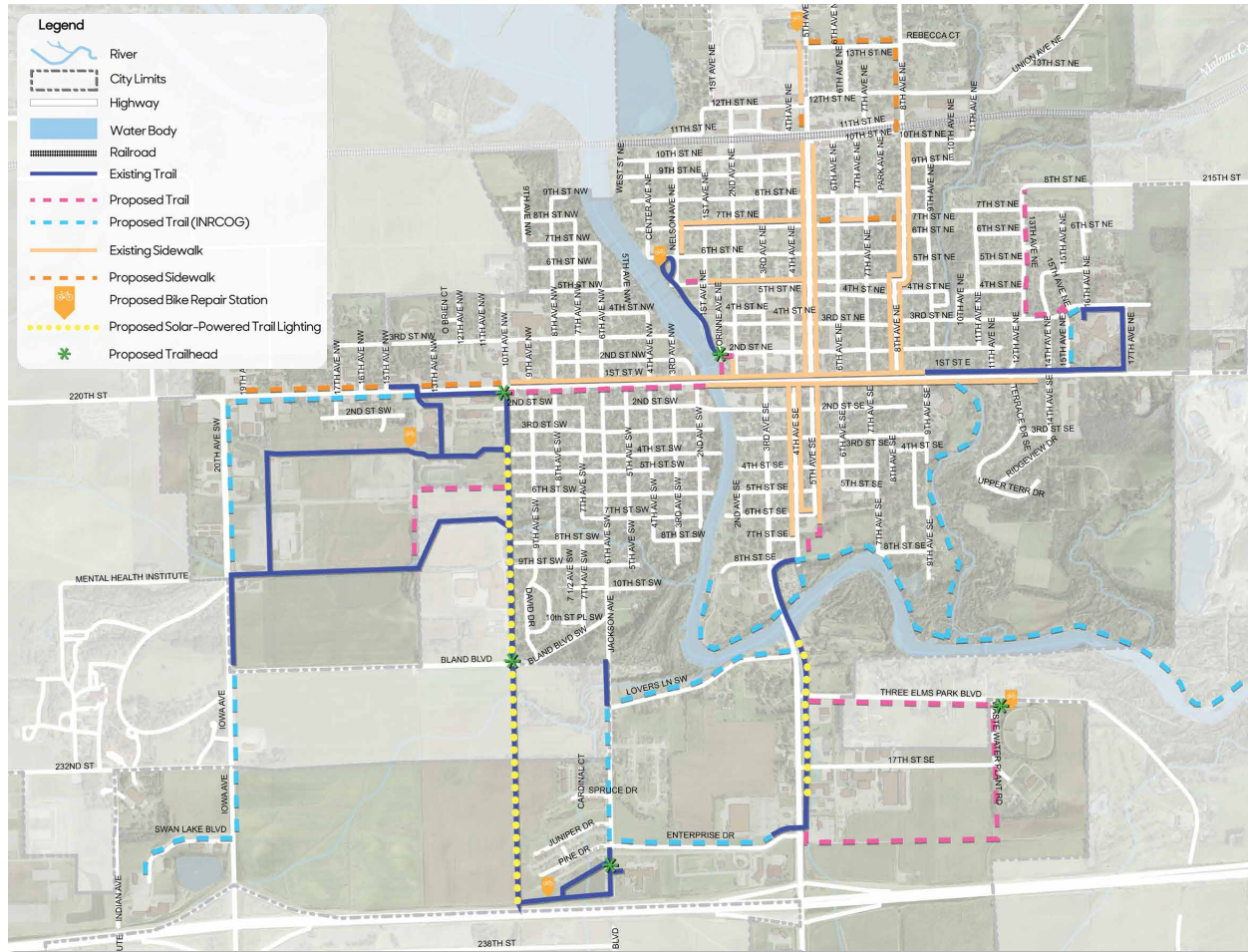
The addition of trail amenities throughout the trail system would allow for a better user experience. Lighting on the existing trails is inconsistent and increased lighting was desired to improve trail safety and accessibility. During the design workshops aging residents expressed a desire for frequent resting places along the trails.

Liberty Trail currently links the west side of town to the schools, but there are no trail connections to the east side of the community with the Wapsipinicon River being the divider. "I ride my bike to...different places, and I find that all of the sudden...if you're on a trail—poof—you're off a trail... it isn't always easy to reach a destination by bike," (re: What People Said, 3b). The design team worked with INRCOG to determine what the existing connectivity issues were and what areas additional sidewalks or trails could be added. The design team recommended the addition of sidewalks and trails throughout town to better connect the systems as a whole.

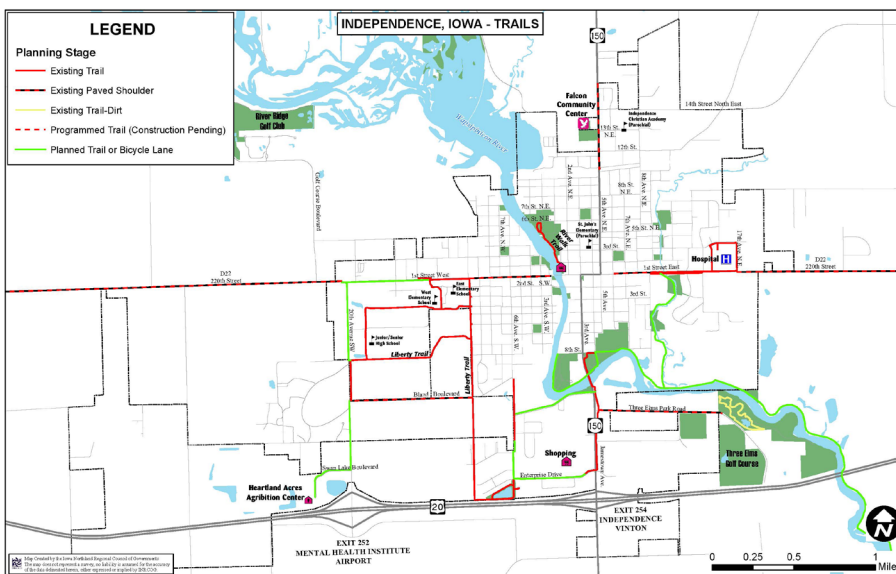
Proposed trailheads throughout the community would provide trail users with a location for a rest stop, bike repair station, dog stations, trash receptacles, and directional way-finding signage to popular destinations.



Proposed amenities on existing trails include solar lighting, signage, and benches.



Proposed connectivity plan



Existing trails plan completed by INRCOG

Opinion of Probable Cost

Connectivity Plan & Trail Improvements

The following costs are meant to guide the steering committee as they determine which parts of the overall trail plan they want to focus on. Amenities and plantings are shown as a la carte items and can be easily multiplied if a project needs more than one. An overall total is not being provided, but is a means to determine costs for a variety of options that could be implemented throughout the community. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. A site survey should be conducted prior to implementation to determine site grading and quantities. Based on the project, the steering committee may need to enlist the help of a landscape architect, civil engineer, or signage company.

Overstory Tree Recommendations

Common Hackberry



Accolade Elm



Thornless Honeylocust



Understory Tree Recommendations

Dwarf Crabapple



Eastern Redbud



Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry



The design team recommends planting a diverse palette of trees along the corridor. These recommendations are just the starting point. Additional varieties should be planted.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

SF = square feet LS = lump sum CY = cubic yards SY = square yards
EA = each TBD = to be determined LF = linear foot

Trail Connections	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	TBD		
Temporary Erosion Control	1	TBD		
Site Grading	1	TBD		
Parking Lot (per 1,000 SF)				
Excavation	30	CY	\$14.00	\$414.81
6" PCC Concrete with 6" Granular Subbase	111	SY	\$70.00	\$7,777.78
Handicap Parking Sign	1	EA	\$150.00	\$150.00
Pavement Removal for 100 LF*				
Sidewalk, 100 LF, 4" depth, 4' wide	44	SY	\$15.00	\$660.00
Curb & Gutter, 100 LF	100	LF	\$20.00	\$2,000.00
Sidewalk or Trail Installation per 100 LF*				
Granular 10' Trail (Crushed Limestone 6" Thick)	1,000	SF	\$1.75	\$1,750.00
4' Paved Sidewalk	45	SY	\$70.00	\$3,150.00
6' Paved Sidewalk	67	SY	\$70.00	\$4,690.00
8' Paved Trail	89	SY	\$70.00	\$6,230.00
10' Paved Trail	112	SY	\$70.00	\$7,840.00
Pavement Markings for Share-the-road	100	LF	\$1.25	\$125.00
ADA Curb Ramps with Warning Panels	1	EA	\$850.00	\$850.00
Highly-Visible Crosswalk	1	EA	\$500.00	\$500.00
Speed Limit Pavement Marking	2	EA	\$250.00	\$500.00
Share-the-road Signage	1	EA	\$150.00	\$150.00
Plantings for 100 LF*				
Overstory Trees - 2" Caliper	2	EA	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
Understory Trees - 1" Caliper	2	EA	\$350.00	\$700.00
Seeding at Trail Edge (6' both sides)	1,200	SF	\$0.25	\$300.00
Amenities (a la carte)				
Solar LED Pedstrian Lighting	1	EA	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Interpretive Signage	1	EA	\$750.00	\$750.00
Pedestrian Way-finding Signage	1	EA	\$500.00	\$500.00
Way-finding Kiosk	1	EA	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Bicycle Repair Station	1	EA	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Benches	1	EA	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Additional fees to add to the overall cost:				
*Probable cost is for 100 linear foot of trail or sidewalk.	Contingency		10% of total cost	
	Mobilization		15% of total cost	
	Design/Engineering		15% of total cost	
TOTAL = overall costs + additional fees				

Trail Connections

Highway 150 Trail & 3 Elms Park Road Trail

Many residents expressed their disappointment in the disconnect to some of their favorite destinations within Independence. The Independence Baseball/Softball Complex and the Falcon Civic Center are among the top destinations that residents felt unable to access via walking or biking.

The existing pedestrian/cyclist route to the Independence Baseball/Softball Complex is a paved shoulder trail. Residents think this type of trail is not a safe way for youth to access this destination. Many residents preferred an off-road trail solution that would run along Three Elms Park Boulevard but would have a buffer between the trail and the roadway.

The Falcon Civic Center located on the north end of Independence is a great resource for the community, but people have to drive to get there because the current sidewalk stops two blocks short of this popular location. The creation of a sidewalk or trail in front of the Buchanan County Visitor Center would allow residents to walk or bike to the Falcon Civic Center since adjacent sidewalks are already in place. It would also make it easier for people to get to the visitor center on foot or on a bike.



Existing conditions



Proposed trail connection



Existing conditions



Proposed improvements

Opinion of Probable Cost

Highway 150 Trail & 3 Parks Road Trail

The following cost opinions are based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimated and a site survey should be conducted prior to implementation to verify quantities shown in the cost opinion.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

SF = square feet LS = lump sum CY = cubic yards SY = square yards

EA = each

Highway 150 Trail	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	LS	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Temporary Erosion Control	1	LS	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Site Grading	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
8' Trail				
Excavation	96	CY	\$14.00	\$1,344.00
4" PCC w/ 6" gravel	320	SY	\$70.00	\$22,400.00
Lawn/Seed Mix & Prep (2' each side)	1440	SF	\$0.50	\$720.00
ADA Curb Ramp	1	EA	\$850.00	\$850.00
Highly-visible Crosswalk	1	LS	\$500.00	\$500.00
Subtotal				\$33,314.00
Contingency (10%)				\$3,331.40
Mobilization (15%)				\$4,997.10
Design/Engineering (15%)				\$4,997.10
TOTAL				\$46,639.60

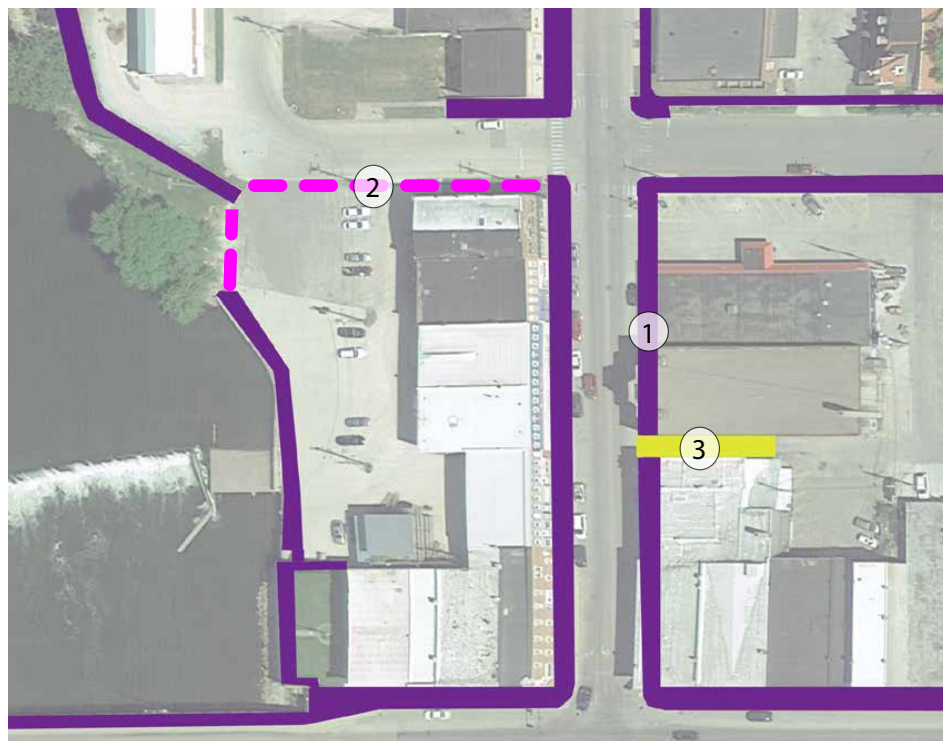
3 Elms Park Road Trail	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	LS	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Temporary Erosion Control	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Site Grading	1	LS	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
8' Trail				
Excavation	887	CY	\$14.00	\$12,418.00
4" PCC w/ 6" gravel	2365	SY	\$70.00	\$165,573.33
Lawn/Seed Mix & Prep (5' each side)	26610	SF	\$0.10	\$2,661.00
ADA Curb Ramp	11	EA	\$850.00	\$9,350.00
Subtotal				\$217,502.33
Contingency (10%)				\$21,750.23
Mobilization (15%)				\$32,625.35
Design/Engineering (15%)				\$32,625.35
TOTAL				\$304,503.27

Trail Connections

2nd Street NE Sidewalk & Pocket Park

River Walk Trail is a beautiful trail along the Wapsipinicon River that dead ends in a parking lot, with no clear route to get to Brimmer Park to the south or 2nd Ave NE to the east. Both routes lead to Independence's business district on 1st Street E. The design team suggested a new sidewalk on the south side of 2nd Street NE. This link would allow River Walk Trail users to be connected to the business district via a hard surface trail or sidewalk. Improvements to the parking lot where River Walk Trail ends would create a better user experience and would include signage directing users where to go to access the nearby shops, restaurants, and businesses.

The steering committee suggested the alleyway south of Malek Theatre be turned into a public plaza area with outdoor seating, art, festoon lighting, and decorative pavers. Changing the alley drive would also allow for replacing the curb and adding a parallel parking spot on 2nd Ave NE. The plaza area would not impact the existing parking area to the east nor the egress for the adjacent buildings.



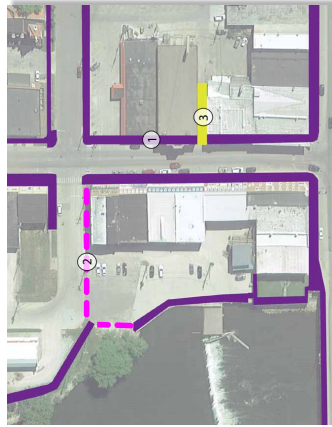
Legend

- ① Existing Sidewalks or Trails (Typical)
- ② Proposed Sidewalks (Typical)
- ③ Proposed Public Plaza

Trail Connections

River Walk Trail is a beautiful trail along the Wapsipicon River that dead ends in a parking lot, with no clear route to get to Birmer Park to the south or 2nd Ave NE to the east. Both routes lead to Independence's business district on 1st Street E. The design team suggested a new sidewalk on the south side of 2nd Street NE. This link would allow River Walk Trail users to be connected to the business district via a hard surface trail or sidewalk. Improvements to the parking lot where River Walk Trail ends would create a better user experience and would include signage directing users where to go to access the nearby shops, restaurants, and businesses.

The steering committee suggested the alleyway south of Malek Theatre be turned into a public plaza area with outdoor seating, art, festoon lighting, and decorative pavers. Changing the alley drive would also allow for replacing the curb and adding a parallel parking spot on 2nd Ave NE. The plaza area would not impact the existing parking area to the east nor the egress for the adjacent buildings.



Legend

- ① Existing Sidewalks or Trails (Typical)
- ② Proposed Sidewalks (Typical)
- ③ Proposed Public Plaza

Independence Trail Connections

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

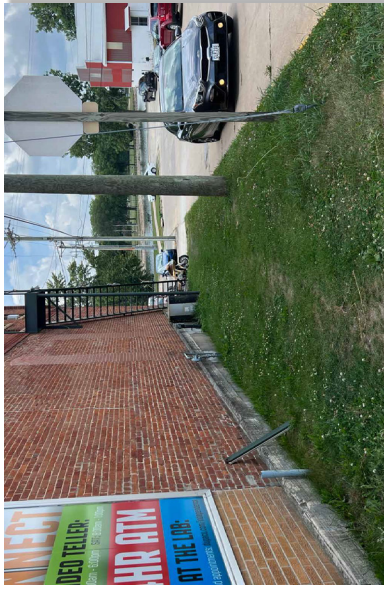
Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA

Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University

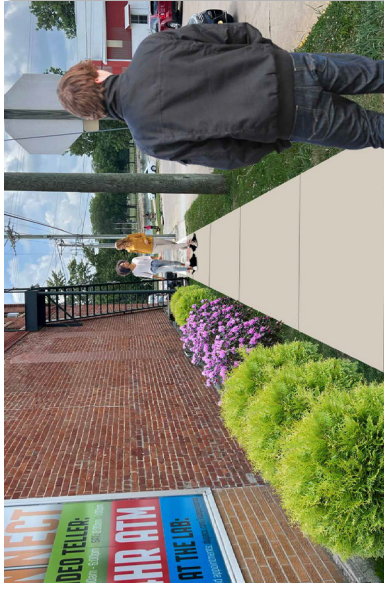
Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



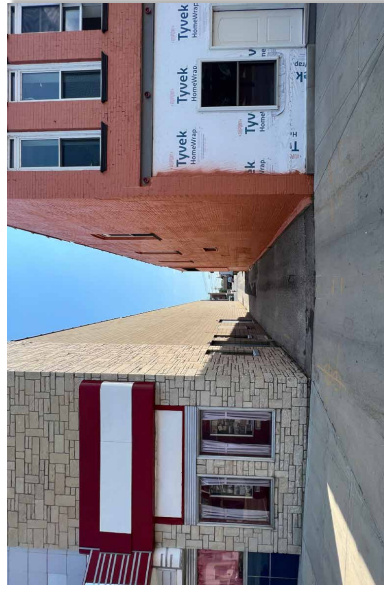
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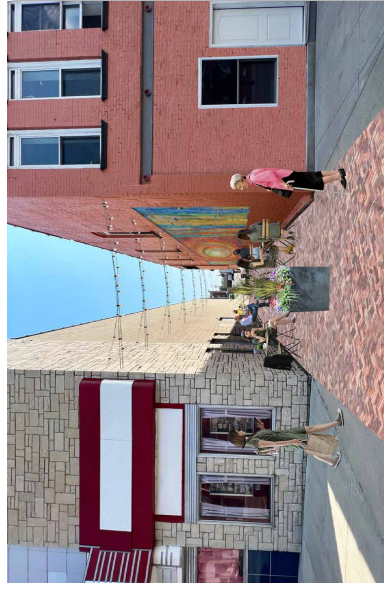
A narrow "cow path" shows the desired connection along 2nd Street NE to Riverwalk Park.



The proposed trail connection to Riverwalk Park includes a crosswalk to the existing trail and provides a paved walking route to 2nd Ave NE.



The steering committee suggested utilizing the narrow alleyway to the south of Malek Theatre for a public plaza area.



The proposed plaza space could include art, festoon lighting, planters, trash receptacles, outdoor seating, and decorative paving.

Opinion of Probable Cost

2nd Street NE Sidewalk & Pocket Park

The following cost opinions are based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimated and a site survey should be conducted prior to implementation to verify quantities shown in the cost opinion. The design team suggests getting pricing from several sources to ensure you get a competitive price.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

EA = each LS = lump sum CY = cubic yards SY = square yards

2nd Street NE Sidewalk	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	LS	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Temporary Erosion Control	1	LS	\$500.00	\$500.00
4' Sidewalk				
Excavation	12	CY	\$14.00	\$168.00
4" PCC w/ 6" gravel	38	SY	\$70.00	\$2,660.00
Lawn/Seed Mix & Prep (2')	170	SF	\$0.50	\$85.00
Plantings				
Shrubs	20	EA	\$60.00	\$1,200.00
Mulch	340	SF	\$1.00	\$340.00
Subtotal				\$5,953.00
Contingency (10%)				\$595.30
Mobilization (15%)				\$892.95
Design/Engineering (15%)				\$892.95
TOTAL				\$8,334.20

Design Expertise Recommended

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the Independence visioning committee or available city staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect and civil engineer.



Proposed sidewalk on 2nd Street NE to River Walk Trail.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

EA = each LS = lump sum CY = cubic yards SY = square yards
TBD = to be determined LF = linear foot SF = square foot

Pocket Park	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	LS	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Temporary Erosion Control	1	LS	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Pavement				
Demolition	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Excavation	44	CY	\$14.00	\$622.22
4" PCC w/ 6" gravel (Subbase for Brick Paving)	133	SY	\$70.00	\$9,333.33
Decorative Brick Paving	1,200	SF	\$20.00	\$24,000.00
6" Concrete Curb	14	LF	\$20.00	\$280.00
Site Utilities				
Electrical	1	TBD		
Amenities				
Festoon Lighting	1	LS	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Bistro Tables	4	EA	\$3,000.00	\$12,000.00
Planters	2	EA	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
Mural	1	TBD		
Subtotal				\$72,235.56
Contingency (10%)				\$7,223.56
Mobilization (15%)				\$10,835.33
Design/Engineering (15%)				\$10,835.33
TOTAL				\$101,129.78

Design Expertise Recommended

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the Independence visioning committee or available city staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect, lighting company, and civil engineer.



Proposed pocket park south of Malek Theatre.

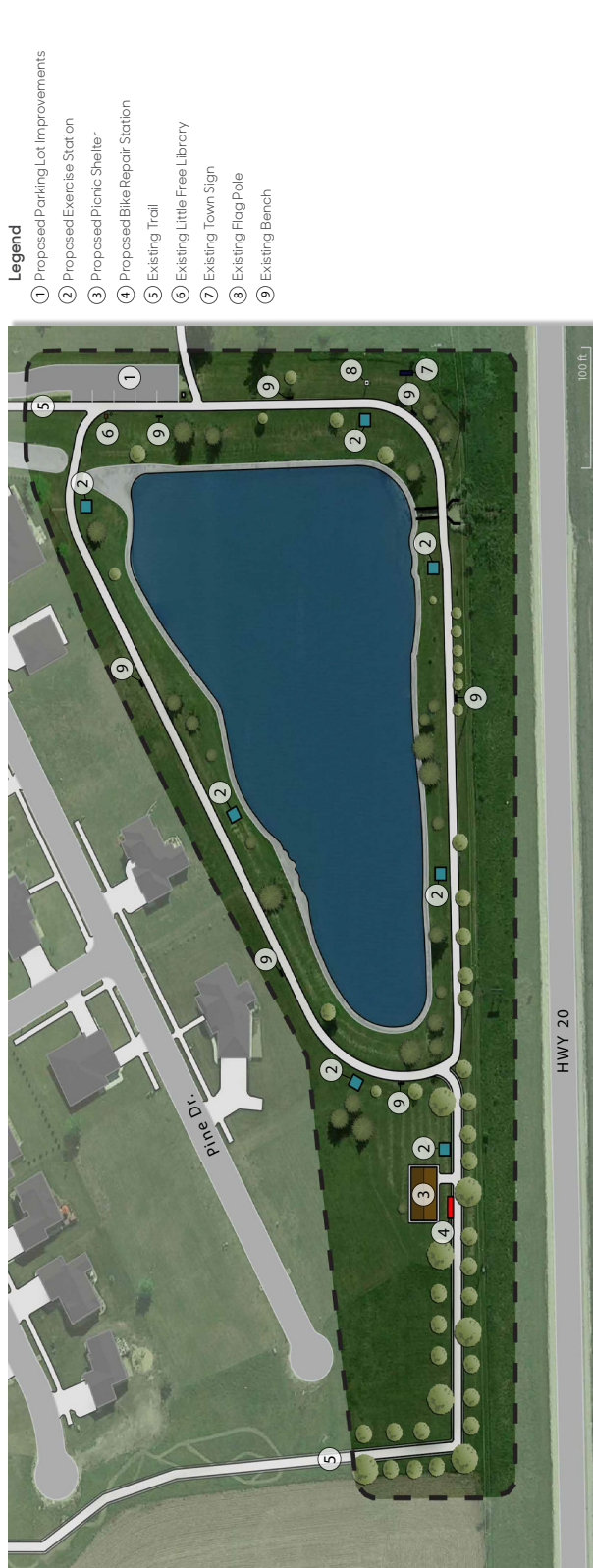
Triangle Park Trailhead

Triangle Park features a loop trail with parking, benches, a little free library, and shade trees. Additional amenities could be added to this park to make it a destination trailhead. The design team is proposing the addition of a picnic shelter, bike repair station, and several outdoor exercise stations. Community-wide improvements such as solar lighting, trash receptacles, benches, and signage could also be added along the existing trail.

Additional trail connections to the north along Jackson Avenue and east along Enterprise Drive will link Triangle Park to the proposed community-wide trail system.



Proposed Triangle Park enhancements include a picnic shelter, bike repair station, tree plantings, signage, and exercise stations.



Proposed Triangle Park Trailhead Improvements.



Residents asked for improvements along existing trails such as the trail around Triangle Park.



Proposed Triangle Park enhancements include a picnic shelter, bike repair station, tree plantings, signage, and exercise stations.

Triangle Park Trailhead

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Independence

Triangle Park Trailhead

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA
Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University
Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



Triangle Park Trailhead- Opinion of Probable Cost

The following cost opinion is based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimated and a site survey should be conducted prior to implementation to verify quantities shown in the cost opinion. The design team suggests getting pricing from several sources to ensure you get a competitive price.

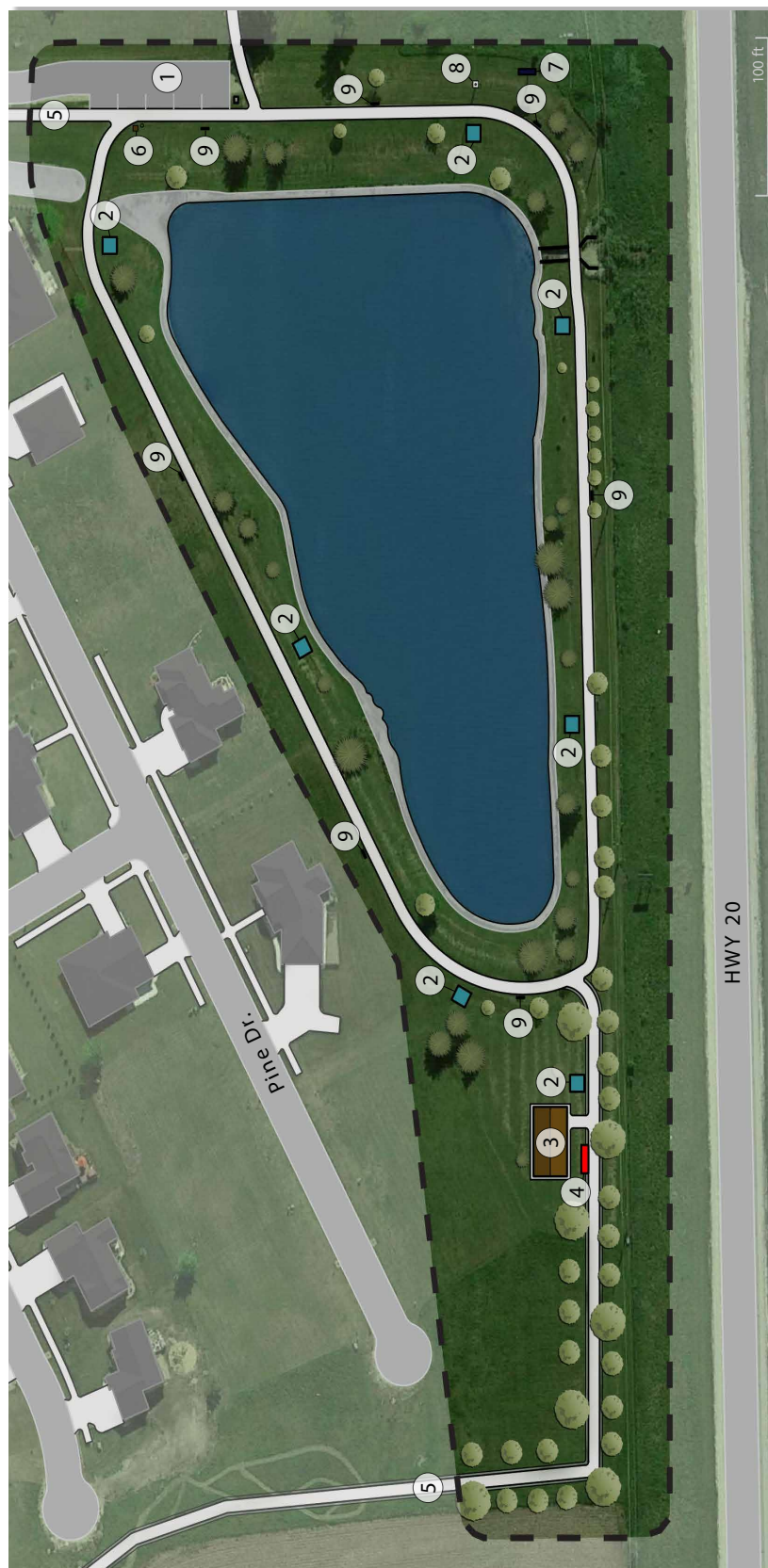
Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

EA = each LS = lump sum CY = cubic yards SY = square yards

Triangle Park Improvements	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Site Survey	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Demolition & Site Grading	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Parking Lot				
Excavation	83	CY	\$14.00	\$1,166.67
6" PCC Concrete with 6" Granular Subbase	500	SY	\$70.00	\$35,000.00
Handicap Parking Sign	1	EA	\$150.00	\$150.00
Plantings				
Overstory Trees - 2" Caliper	10	EA	\$500.00	\$5,000.00
Understory Trees - 1" Caliper	6	EA	\$350.00	\$2,100.00
Amenities				
12' x 18' Picnic Shelter	1	LS	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Way-finding Kiosk	1	LS	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Benches	1	EA	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
Exercise Stations with Paved Surfaced with Rubber Surfacing	7	EA	\$10,000.00	\$70,000.00
Bicycle Repair Station	1	EA	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Picnic Tables	2	EA	\$1,500.00	\$3,000.00
Bicycle Rack	2	EA	\$750.00	\$1,500.00
Subtotal				\$158,116.67
Contingency (20%)				\$31,623.33
Mobilization (15%)				\$23,717.50
Design/Engineering (15%)				\$23,717.50
TOTAL				\$237,175.00

Design Expertise Recommended

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the Independence visioning committee or available city staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect, signage company, and civil engineer.



Legend

- ① Proposed Parking Lot Improvements
- ② Proposed Exercise Station
- ③ Proposed Picnic Shelter
- ④ Proposed Bike Repair Station
- ⑤ Existing Trail
- ⑥ Existing Little Free Library
- ⑦ Existing Town Sign
- ⑧ Existing Flag Pole
- ⑨ Existing Bench

Proposed Triangle Park Trailhead improvements.

Signage & Way-finding

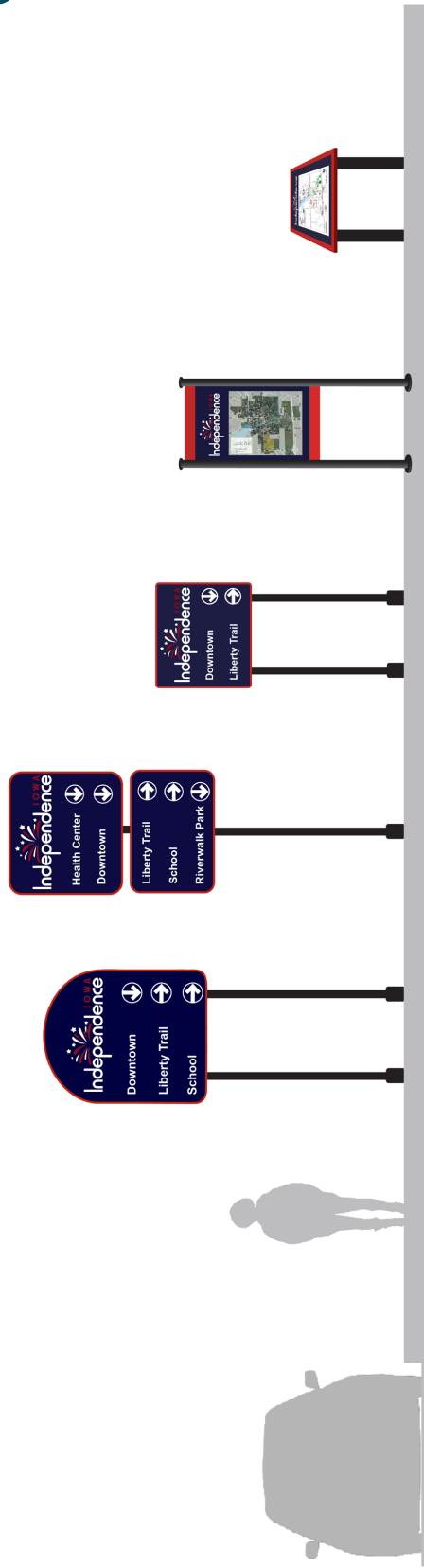
Many residents expressed their disappointment in the disconnect to some of their favorite destinations within Independence. The Independence Baseball/Softball Complex and the Falcon Civic Center are among the top destinations that residents felt unable to access via walking or biking.

The existing pedestrian/cyclist route to the Independence Baseball/Softball Complex is a paved shoulder trail. Residents think this type of trail is not a safe way for youth to access this destination. Many residents preferred an off-road trail solution that would run along Three Elms Park Boulevard but would have a buffer between the trail and the roadway.

The Falcon Civic Center located on the north end of Independence is a great resource for the community, but people have to drive to get there because the current sidewalk stops two blocks short of this popular location. The creation of a sidewalk or trail in front of the Buchanan County Visitor Center would allow residents to walk or bike to the Falcon Civic Center since adjacent sidewalks are already in place. It would also make it easier for people to get to the visitor center on foot or on a bike.



Proposed way-finding signage on 1st Street W directing people to Liberty Trail.



Proposed way-finding signage for pedestrian and vehicular use

Proposed way-finding kiosk

Proposed interpretive signage could be used for way-finding or to showcase historical information about Independence.

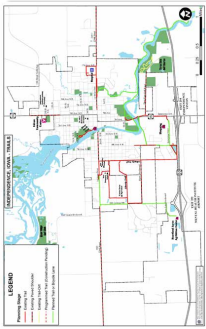


Existing entrance sign

Signage & Way-finding

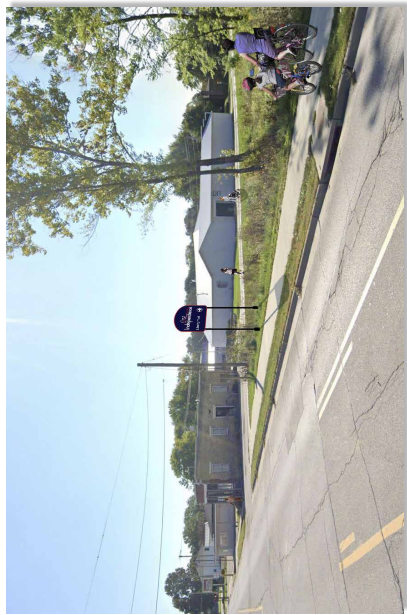
The steering committee wants to create cohesive way-finding signage that could be used to help people locate destinations while visiting Independence.

During the focus group meeting one resident said, "...when [my family goes] biking, we usually look for a trail, but there [are none] that we know of...so we go on the sidewalks [on the east side of town] but then we have to stop because there's a lot of traffic." (re: What People Said, 3b).



Existing city trail map created by INR COG.

The steering committee mentioned that visitors struggle with locating destinations in Independence, including restaurants, lodging, and entertainment (re: What People Said, 3b). The design team created a palette of way-finding signage using the existing logo that could showcase various destinations such as Liberty Trail, the downtown, and Riverwalk Park.



Proposed way-finding signage on 1st Street W directing people to Liberty Trail.

Independence Signage & Way-finding

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA
Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University
Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



Signage & Way-finding – Opinion of Probable Cost

The following cost opinion is based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimated and a site survey should be conducted prior to implementation to verify quantities shown in the cost opinion. The design team suggests getting pricing from several sources to ensure you get a competitive price.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

EA = each

Signage + Way-finding*	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
Vehicular Way-finding Signage	1	EA	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Signage Cap	1	EA	\$350.00	\$350.00
Pedestrian Way-finding Signage	1	EA	\$500.00	\$500.00
Way-finding Kiosk	1	EA	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Interpretive Signage	1	EA	\$750.00	\$750.00
*The total cost of the project is variable depending on quantity and what type of sign is used. A way-finding study should be done to determine all the destinations the community would like to show.				

Design Expertise Recommended

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the Independence visioning committee or available city staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect, signage company, graphic designer and electrical engineer.

Implementation Strategies

The Visioning Program is just the beginning of the planning process for implementation of projects that will contribute to an enhanced quality of life in Independence. Although there is much value in data gathering, analysis, conclusions and recommendations, the greatest value is providing the residents of Independence with the opportunity to look at their community from different perspectives and to motivate future positive change. It is the design team's intent to provide the community with a framework for significant future development and enhancement of community resources. It is recommended that projects be approached individually, keeping in mind some may occur at the same time or may require phasing to be completed. Short-term projects are those that can be more easily accomplished or address safety issues. Long-range projects will need to be implemented as funding allows. Based on the strategy that early success builds momentum, we recommend the first projects be those that can be more easily accomplished and be highly visible.

Where to start: The sidewalk from River Walk Trail along the south side of 2nd Street NE would be a great starting point. This connection was well received at the public presentation and would improve connectivity in the downtown area.

1st Street W Corridor: 10th Street to the Wapsipinicon Bridge is slated for construction in 2024. Updated lighting, tree plantings, and new signage could be implemented during construction. Plans to include any additional amenities should be considered immediately so funding can be secured.

Most residents loved the proposed roundabout because it is safer and would allow better traffic flow. Significant engineering and design would be completed before this can be implemented. Continue showing the public the graphics and the idea of a roundabout to gain acceptance on this significant change.

As the remaining portions of 1st Street W are redeveloped, plans should include where additional trail and sidewalks connections could be made, improved lighting, and signage locations.

The first step for the bioretention area is to secure an easement for the area on private property. A runoff study should be conducted to determine how much runoff the area receives to determine the bioretention size needed. Additional soils testing and stormwater calculations will be needed to finalize the study for the project.

Trail Connections: New sidewalks or trails throughout the community can be phased as time and resources allow. The city of Independence is fortunate to have a significant amount of existing trails. Adding way-finding signage calling out these trails would be a good 1st step project.

The committee should begin discussions with Buchanan County regarding the off-road trail to the Softball/Baseball Complex because this area is not within city limits.

The trails connections information should be shared with INRCOG and included as part of its overall trails master plan for Independence.

Signage & Way-finding: Due to the extensive need for way-finding signage throughout Independence, a study should be completed first to determine the locations, destinations and signage type. This project could be phased as funding allows, with the first signs being destinations such as Liberty Trail, Triangle Park, and the Softball/Baseball Complex, which were all mentioned throughout the public input meetings

Triangle Park Trailhead: A great first step for this project would be to pave the parking area to allow for ADA-accessible access to the existing trail. Additional amenities can be added as funding is secured. The steering committee could look into a REAP grant for the shelter house, site amenities, and plantings.



The community was invited to review the concept boards before the Friday evening varsity football game.

Available Resources

There are many creative ways that communities can raise the resources necessary to fund and implement projects. The following list is a compilation of various sources and opportunities for funding the projects conceptualized during the visioning process. This list is not all-inclusive; it is meant to serve as a tool to assist in brainstorming ideas.

Funding Opportunities

- Grants
- Partnerships (private and public)
- Trusts and endowments
- Fundraising and donations
- Memorials
- Volunteer labor
- Low-interest loans
- Implementation of project in phases

Funding Sources

- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Department of Education
- Iowa Department of Economic Development
- Utility companies
- Trees Forever

Grant Programs

- Alliant Energy and Trees Forever Branching Out Program
- Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP)
- Iowa DOT/DNR Fund Iowa
- Iowa DOT Iowa's Living Roadways Projects Program
- Iowa DOT Living Roadways Trust Fund Program
- Iowa DOT Pedestrian Curb Ramp Construction Program
- Iowa DOT Statewide Transportation Enhancement Funding
- Iowa DNR Recreation Infrastructure Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- National Recreational Trails Program
- Pheasants Forever
- Revitalization Assistance for Community Improvement (RACI) Grant Program
- State Recreational Trails Program
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Appendix A

Refer to the full Community Project Funding Guide at:
<https://treesforever.org/Community-Project-Funding-Guide/>

Trees Forever Community Project Funding Guide

The following shows what categories are in the table of contents. Refer to the online guide which includes specific grants available for each category of the table of contents.

Table of Contents

- Downtown Streetscape
- Historic Preservation, Ecological Restoration & Education
- Park/Open Space Acquisition
- Trees & Plants
- Trails

Appendix B

Refer to the full IDOT funding guide at: <https://iowadot.gov/grants-programs>

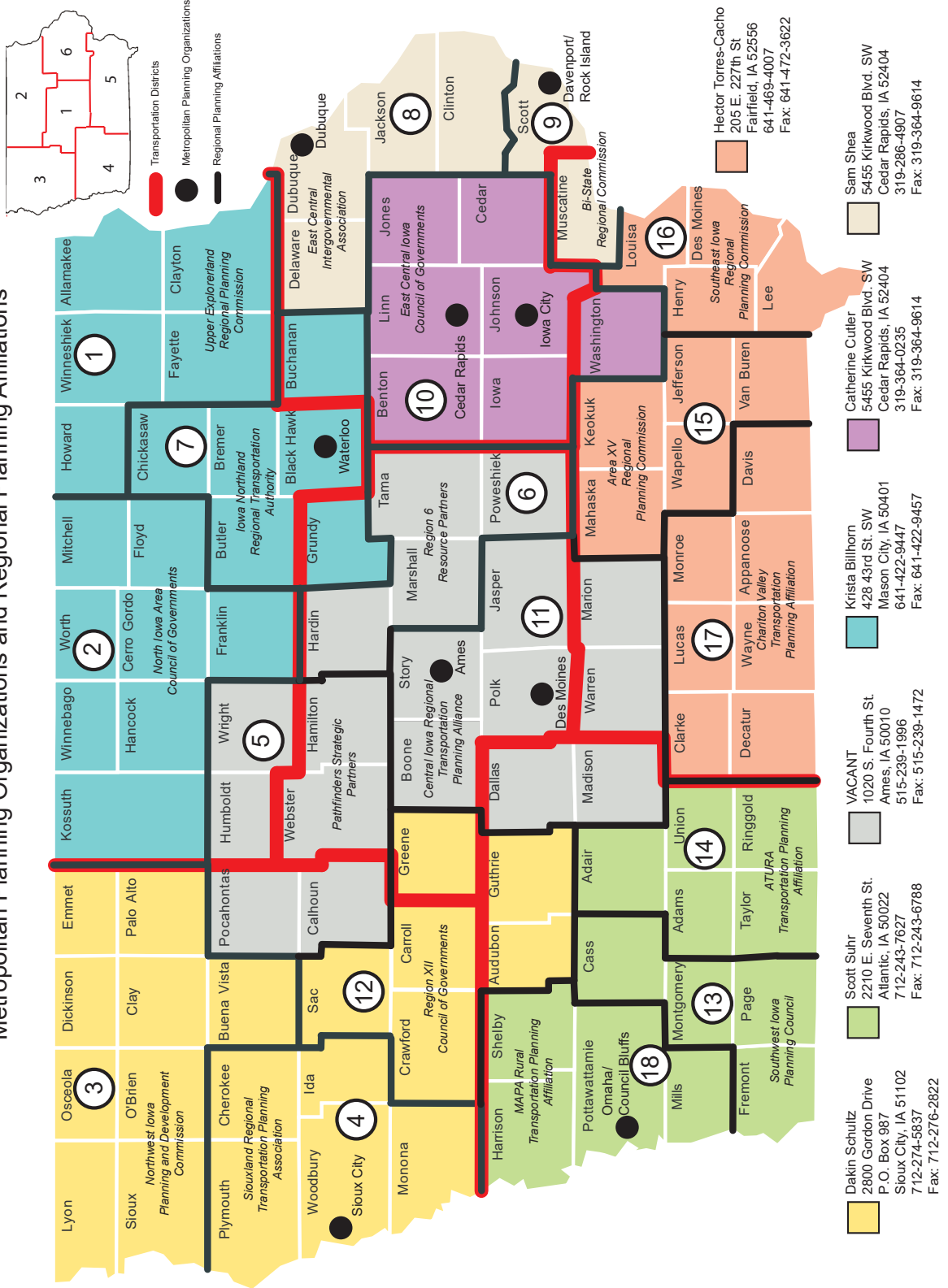
The full list is available on the website. The following grants are not all of the potential funding sources but could be used as a starting point:

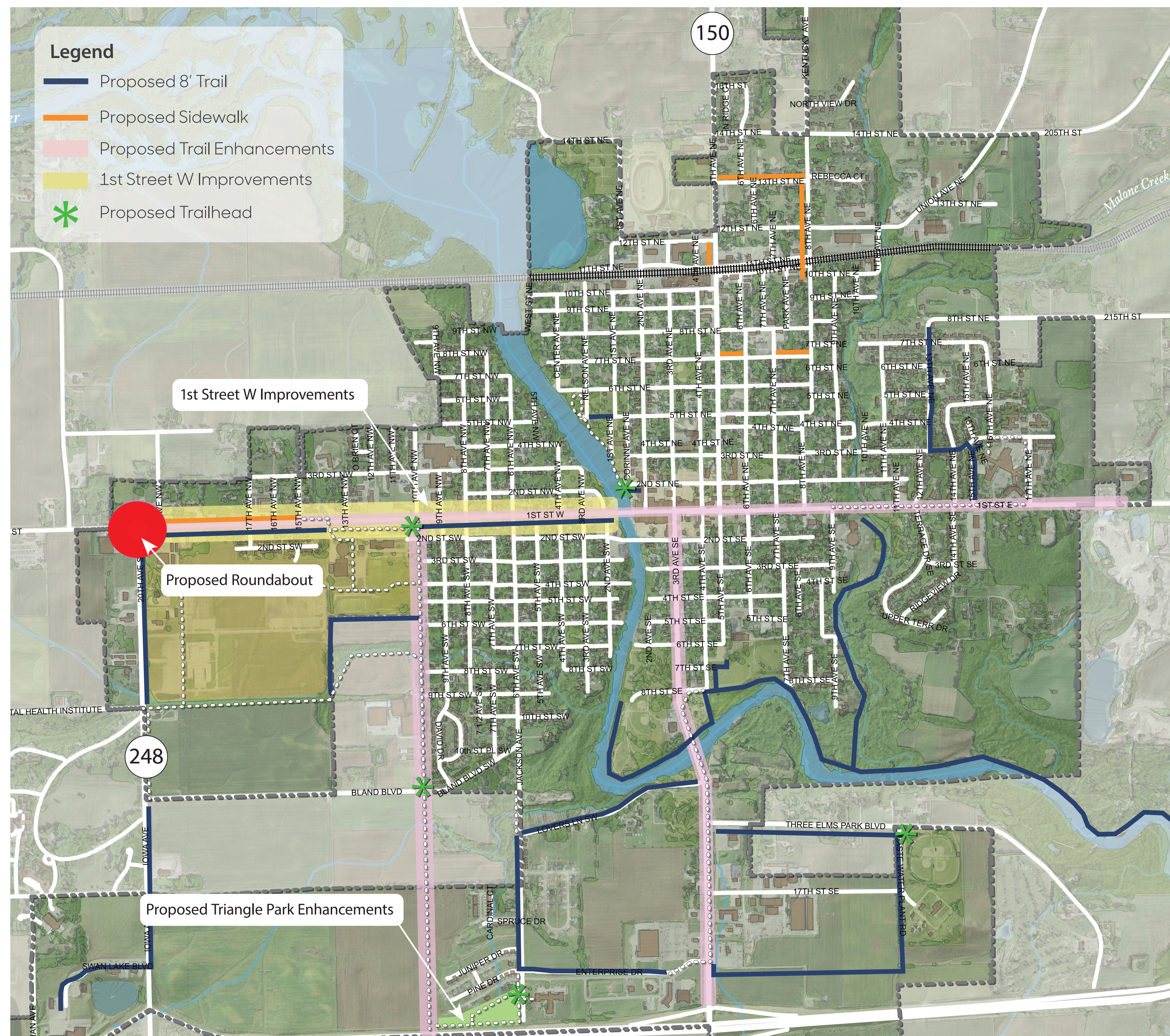
- **DOT/DNR Fund** for trails and enhancements
- **Transportation Alternatives Program (Ta Set-Aside Or Tap)** for safe routes to school, trails and enhancements, and recreational trails
- **Living Roadways Trust Fund** for trails and enhancements
- **Federal And State Recreational Trails** for trails and enhancements



District Transportation Planners' Areas of Responsibility

Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Affiliations





Proposed design concepts in Independence.

Concept Overview

During the Design Workshop Open House, residents were encouraged to come learn about the Community Visioning process, review the analysis that had been done, and give input on design concepts that were guided by the steering committee. Residents had an opportunity to review all the analysis boards provided by Iowa State University, interact with the design team, and leave feedback on the projects. The open house was an essential part of the process for the design team to better understand and finalize conceptual ideas based on the community's desires.

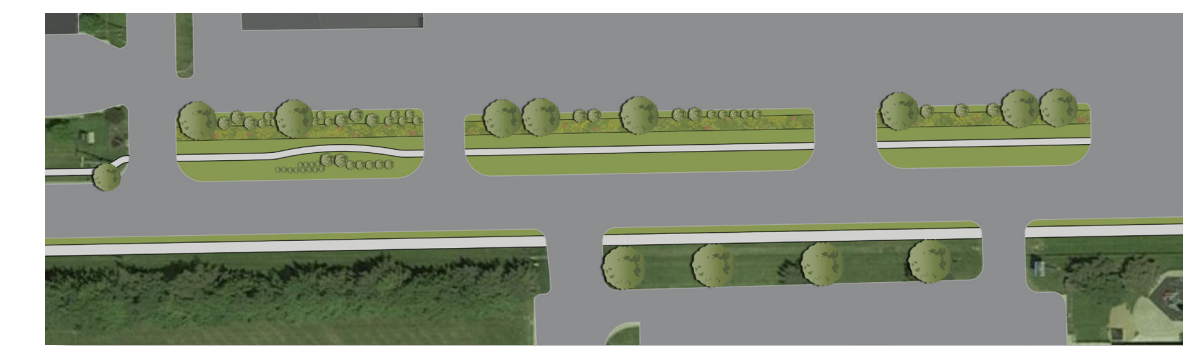
1st Street W improvements focus on safety, drainage issues, aesthetics, and amenities. During the Design Workshop, residents were able to manipulate a streetscape model that showed different elements such as lawn areas, trees, trails, sidewalks, and bioretention areas. Residents used Wikki Stix to show alternative routes that would alleviate congestion on 1st Street W. The design team used input from both exercises to shape the conceptual design of 1st Street W.

Residents of all ages expressed interest in creating more trail and sidewalk connections throughout Independence. Workshop participants had the opportunity to draw the routes they frequent or wish to utilize safely. From this activity, the design team was able to prioritize new sidewalk connections and the desired routes for walking trails. Community members also showed an interest in adding amenities to all the trails throughout Independence.

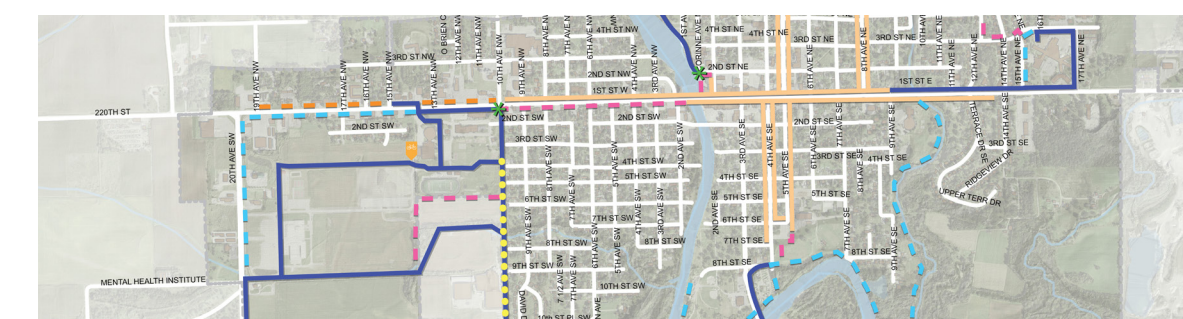
Using the existing Independence logo, adding additional way-finding signage throughout Independence can help residents and visitors find destinations in town such as Liberty Trail or Riverwalk Park. Additionally, signage can help with "branding" of the community and create a cohesive palette for signage.



Board 8a: 1st Street W Improvements



Board 8b: 1st Street W Improvements



Board 9a: Trail Connections



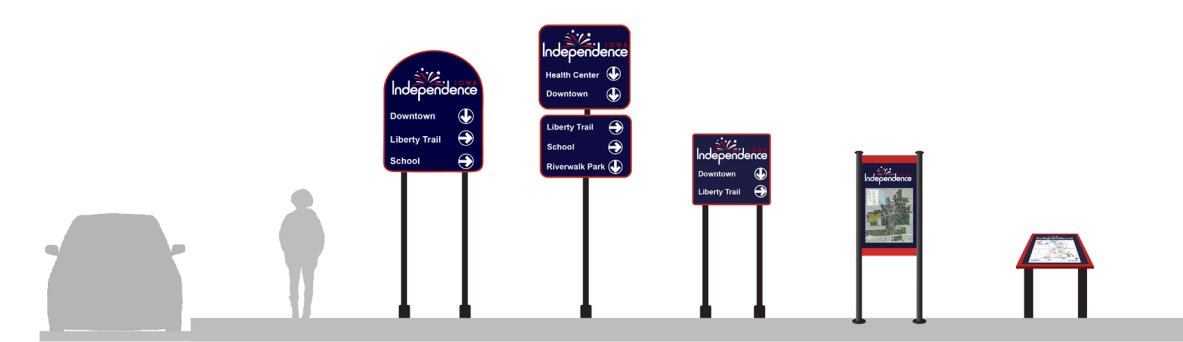
Board 9b: Trail Connections



Board 9c: Trail Connections



Board 10: Triangle Park Trailhead



Board 11: Signage & Way-finding

Independence

Concept Overview

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA

Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation





1st Street W Corridor

1st Street W is a major thoroughfare for Independence, carrying between 5,000 to 8,400 vehicles per day (Iowa Department of Transportation 2021 Daily Traffic County). As you enter Independence from the west, there is no welcome signage. You are greeted with vacant buildings, very little green space or trees and a lot of concrete. The Independence Elementary and Middle Schools are located along 1st Street W and create traffic issues throughout the day, especially during drop off and dismissal times.

During the What, Where, Why meeting, the steering committee prioritized improving the aesthetics and addressing safety and traffic issues along this important corridor. The intersection of Iowa Avenue and 1st Street W is a prime location for a single-lane roundabout that would improve traffic flow and safety. The center of the roundabout would include entrance signage, decorative brick paving and low-growing plant materials, creating

an inviting entrance feature as you enter Independence from the west and south. Independence lacks uniform streetscape furniture. The steering committee suggested a palette of furniture that fits the historical nature of the community. The proposed streetlight was chosen by the committee because it is a cross between two of their existing streetlights and continues the historical/period theme. This palette could be used throughout Independence and begin to unify the improvements to the community.

The north side of 1st Street W has major electrical lines in the right-of-way; the design team is suggesting ornamental trees to soften the appearance of these lines and aid in the overall aesthetics. The south side of the road would accommodate overstory tree plantings. The design team suggested locations for tree plantings that would not impact existing business signage or building facades along this corridor.

Legend

-  Overstory Tree
-  Understory Tree
-  ① Proposed Entrance Signs
-  ② Proposed Roundabout
-  ③ Proposed Parking Lot Realignment
-  ④ Proposed Sidewalk



The proposed roundabout would improve traffic flow and create an inviting entrance into Independence from the south and west.

Streetscape Furniture Palette



The steering committee suggested a light fixture they had photographed in a different community. This fixture combines the acorn style fixture and modern fixture present in downtown Independence.



Bench: Victor Stanley CS-10



Backless Bench: Victor Stanley CS-296



Litter Receptacle: Victor Stanley SD-42

Independence

1st Street W Corridor

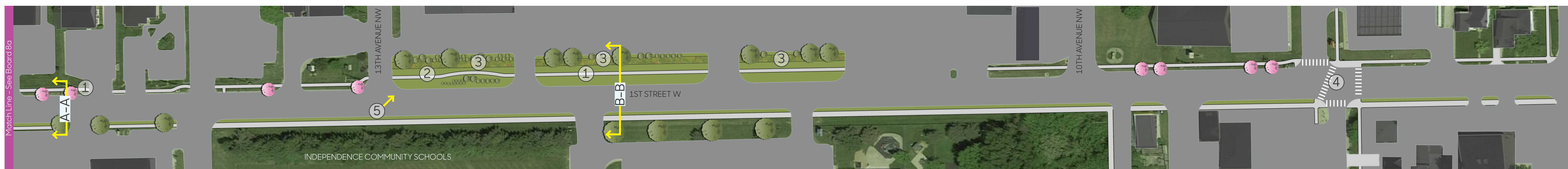
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Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation





Legend

-  Overstory Tree
-  Understory Tree
-  ① Proposed Sidewalk
-  ② Proposed Green Space
-  ③ Proposed Bioretention Cells
-  ④ Existing Highly-visible Crosswalk
-  ⑤ Direction of view for existing conditions and proposed improvements eduts shown on the right

1st Street W Corridor

A portion of the parking lot between 13th Avenue NW and 10th Avenue NW, could be converted to green space with bioretention cells, plantings, sidewalk, and benches. The steering committee is working with Buchanan County and private landowners to break up the "sea of concrete," as one steering committee member described it.

The bioretention cells could help alleviate some of the flooding issues along 1st Street W caused by the large amount of paved surfacing. In addition, the proximity to the schools creates a great opportunity for learning about bioretention areas. The design team recommends installing signage explaining the value of this best management practice for handling stormwater.

Substantial electrical lines run along the north side of 1st Street W. The design team is recommending ornamental trees along most of the north side of 1st Street W and overstory trees set back from the electrical lines in the proposed green space section.

10th Avenue NW to 2nd Ave NW will be reconstructed in 2024 and will include an 8-foot trail along the south side of 1st Street W.



*South side of 1st Street W:
Updated street lights
Proposed overstory trees
Proposed sidewalk*

Section A-A



*South side of 1st Street W:
Updated street lights*

Section B-B

*North side of 1st Street W:
Proposed understory trees
Proposed sidewalk*

*North side of 1st Street W:
Proposed understory trees
Proposed sidewalk
Proposed bioretention cell
Proposed overstory tree and shrub plantings*

Existing Conditions at 1st Street W & 13th Ave NW



Proposed Improvements



The proposed 30 feet of additional green space allows for both overstory and ornamental tree plantings, bioretention cells, sidewalk, benches, and lawn.

Independence

1st Street W Corridor

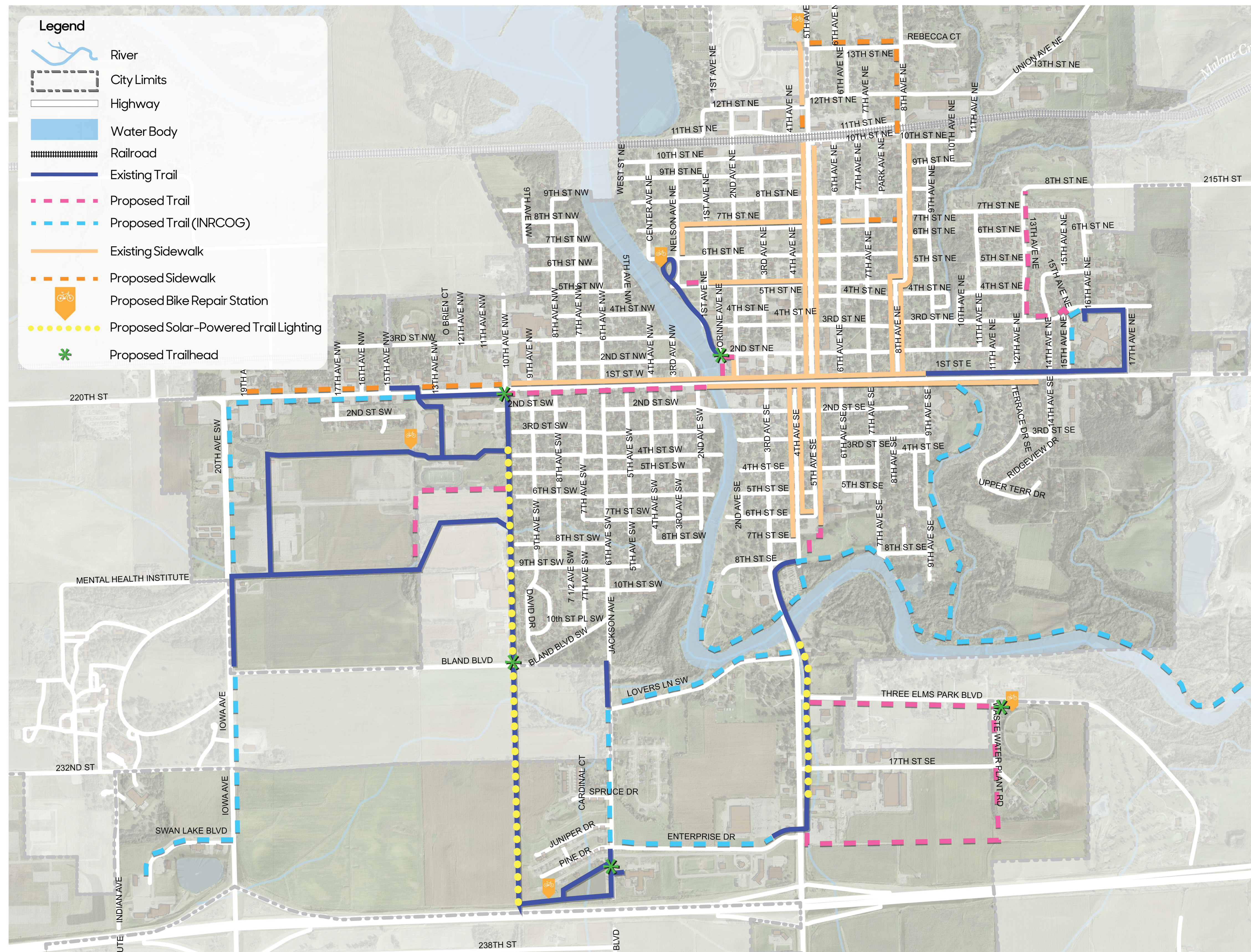
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Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation





Existing and proposed trail and sidewalk connections in Independence.

Trail Connections

The existing trails and sidewalks in Independence are not connected, which is an issue for many residents. Improving trail amenities and connectivity was mentioned many times during the focus groups and design workshop. One resident mentioned, "There [are] areas where there [are] sidewalk and/or trails, and then there [are] areas where there's nothing and people are walking in the street," (re: What People Said, 3b).

The addition of trail amenities throughout the trail system would allow for a better user experience. Lighting on the existing trails is inconsistent and increased lighting was desired to improve trail safety and accessibility. During the design workshops aging residents expressed a desire for frequent resting places along the trails.

Liberty Trail currently links the west side of town to the schools, but there are no trail connections to the east side of the community with the Wapsipinicon River being the divider. "I ride my bike to...different places, and I find that all of the sudden...if you're on a trail—poof—you're off a trail... it isn't always easy to reach a destination by bike," (re: What People Said, 3b). The design team worked with INRCOG to determine what the existing connectivity issues were and what areas additional sidewalks or trails could be added. The design team recommended the addition of sidewalks and trails throughout town to better connect the systems as a whole.

Proposed trailheads throughout the community would provide trail users with a location for a rest stop, bike repair station, dog stations, trash receptacles, and directional way-finding signage to popular destinations.



Proposed trail amenities such as solar lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and signage could be added to existing trails such as Liberty Trail shown above.

Independence Trail Connections

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA

Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



Trail Connections

Many residents expressed their disappointment in the disconnect to some of their favorite destinations within Independence. The Independence Baseball/Softball Complex and the Falcon Civic Center are among the top destinations that residents felt unable to access via walking or biking.

The existing pedestrian/cyclist route to the Independence Baseball/Softball Complex is a paved shoulder trail. Residents think this type of trail is not a safe way for youth to access this destination. Many residents preferred an off-road trail solution that would run along Three Elms Park Boulevard but would have a buffer between the trail and the roadway.

The Falcon Civic Center located on the north end of Independence is a great resource for the community, but people have to drive to get there because the current sidewalk stops two blocks short of this popular location. The creation of a sidewalk or trail in front of the Buchanan County Visitor Center would allow residents to walk or bike to the Falcon Civic Center since adjacent sidewalks are already in place. It would also make it easier for people to get to the visitor center on foot or on a bike.

Existing



There is no sidewalk connection to Buchanan County Visitor Center or Falcon Civic Center from 11th Street NE. Only one block of sidewalk is needed to connect to these popular destinations.

Proposed



The addition of one block of sidewalk or trail in front of the Buchanan County Visitor Center would allow people to access the visitor center and the Falcon Civic Center by walking or biking.



Residents feel the paved shoulder trail is not the safest option to access the Independence Baseball/Softball Complex on Three Elms Park Boulevard.



Residents would prefer an off-road trail to Independence Baseball/Softball Complex because there is adequate space and this type of trail is safer.

Independence Trail Connections

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA

Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation



Trail Connections

River Walk Trail is a beautiful trail along the Wapsipinicon River that dead ends in a parking lot, with no clear route to get to Brimmer Park to the south or 2nd Ave NE to the east. Both routes lead to Independence's business district on 1st Street E. The design team suggested a new sidewalk on the south side of 2nd Street NE. This link would allow River Walk Trail users to be connected to the business district via a hard surface trail or sidewalk. Improvements to the parking lot where River Walk Trail ends would create a better user experience and would include signage directing users where to go to access the nearby shops, restaurants, and businesses.

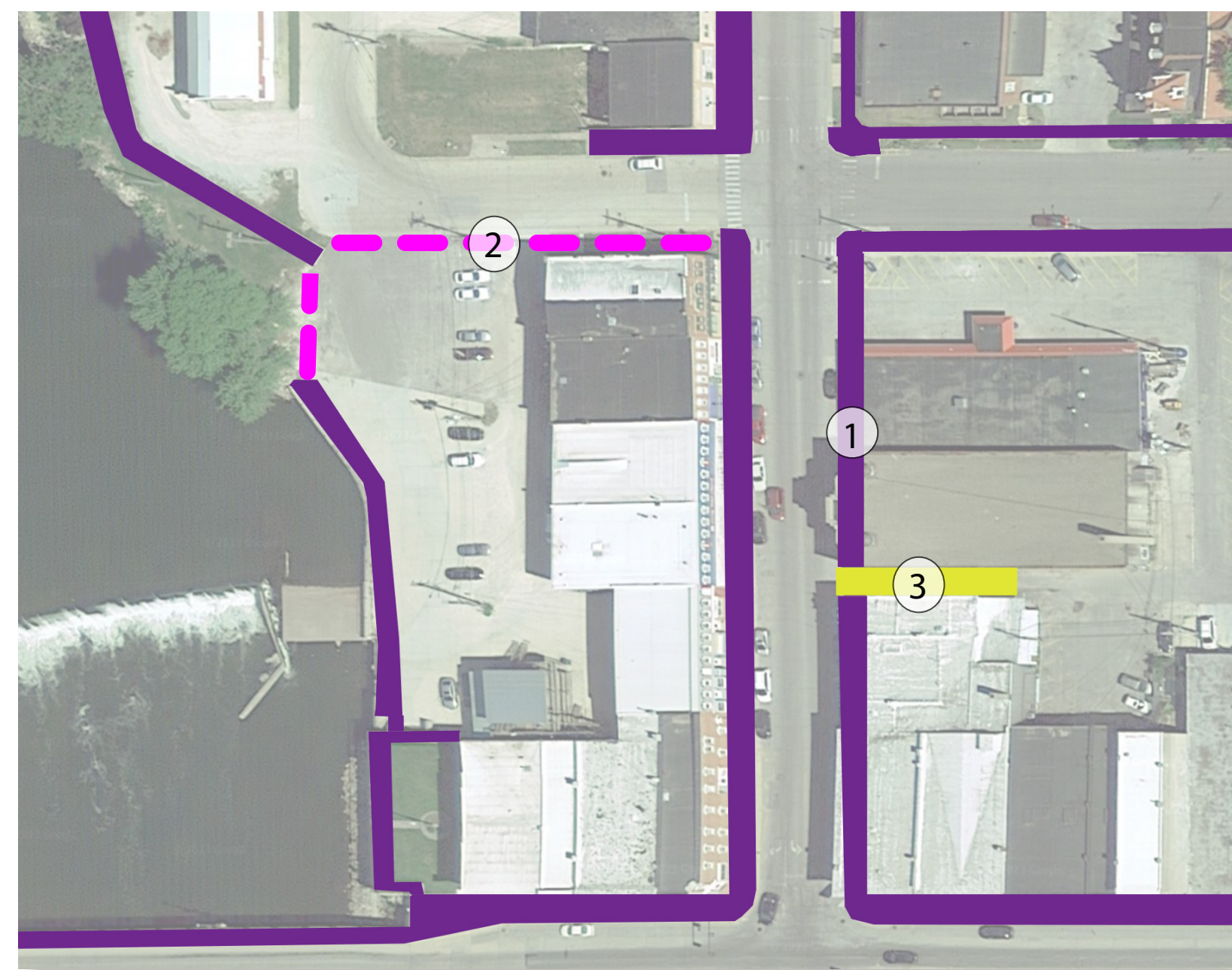
The steering committee suggested the alleyway south of Malek Theatre be turned into a public plaza area with outdoor seating, art, festoon lighting, and decorative pavers. Changing the alley drive would also allow for replacing the curb and adding a parallel parking spot on 2nd Ave NE. The plaza area would not impact the existing parking area to the east nor the egress for the adjacent buildings.



A worn "cow path" shows the desired connection along 2nd Street NE to Riverwalk Park.

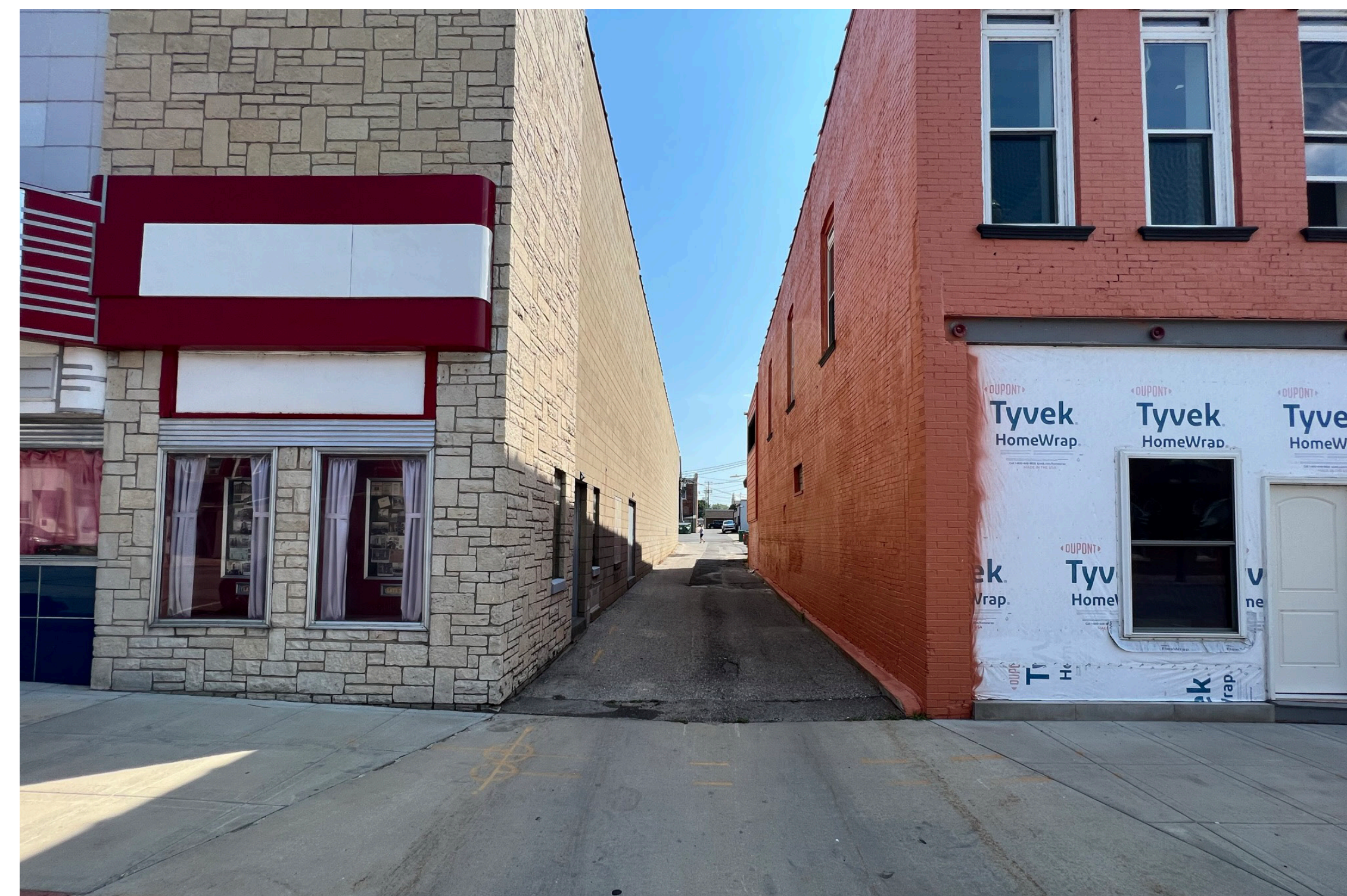


The proposed trail connection to Riverwalk Park includes a crosswalk to the existing trail and provides a paved walkway to 2nd Ave NE.



Legend

- ① Existing Sidewalks or Trails (Typical)
- ② Proposed Sidewalks (Typical)
- ③ Proposed Public Plaza



The steering committee suggested utilizing the narrow alleyway to the south of Malek Theatre for a public plaza area.



The proposed plaza space could include art, festoon lighting, planters, trash receptacles, outdoor seating, and decorative paving.

Independence Trail Connections

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Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation





Proposed Triangle Park Trailhead improvements.



Residents asked for improvements along existing trails such as the trail around Triangle Park.



Proposed Triangle Park enhancements include a picnic shelter, bike repair station, tree plantings, signage, and exercise stations.

Triangle Park Trailhead

Triangle Park features a loop trail with parking, benches, a little free library, and shade trees. Additional amenities could be added to this park to make it a destination trailhead. The design team is proposing the addition of a picnic shelter, bike repair station, and several outdoor exercise stations. Community-wide improvements such as solar lighting, trash receptacles, benches, and signage could also be added along the existing trail.

Additional trail connections to the north along Jackson Avenue and east along Enterprise Drive will link Triangle Park to the proposed community-wide trail system.

Independence

Triangle Park Trailhead

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Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA

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Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation





Proposed way-finding signage for pedestrian and vehicular use

Proposed way-finding kiosk

Proposed interpretive signage could be used for way-finding or to showcase historical information about Independence.

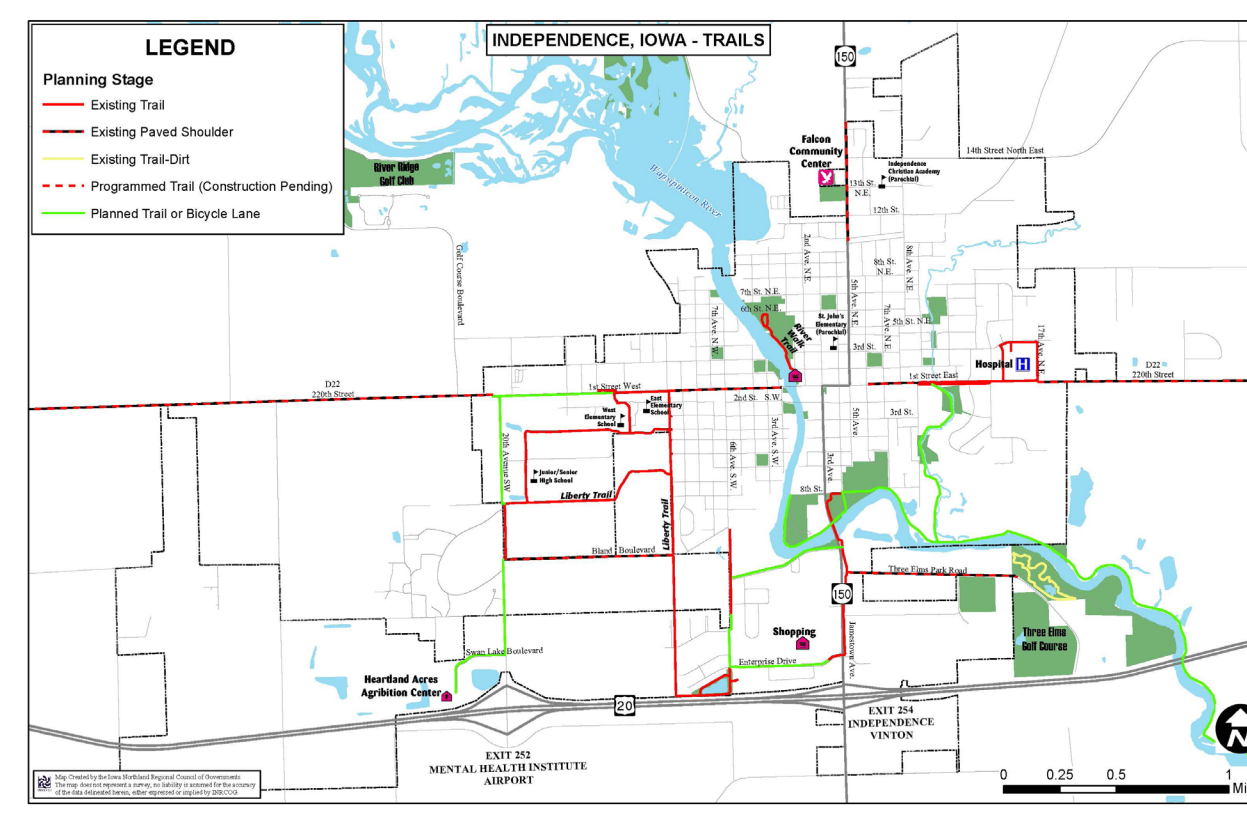


Existing entrance sign

Signage & Way-finding

The steering committee wants to create cohesive way-finding signage that could be used to help people locate destinations while visiting Independence.

During the focus group meeting one resident said, "...when [my family goes] biking, we usually look for a trail...but there [are none] that we know of...so we go on the sidewalks [on the east side of town], but then we have to stop because there's a lot of traffic," (re: What People Said, 3b).



Existing city trail map created by INRCOG.

The steering committee mentioned that visitors struggle with locating destinations in Independence, including restaurants, lodging, and entertainment (re: What People Said, 3b). The design team created a palette of way-finding signage using the existing logo that could showcase various destinations such as Liberty Trail, the downtown, and Riverwalk Park.



Proposed way-finding signage on 1st Street W directing people to Liberty Trail.

Independence

Signage & Way-finding

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

Landscape Architect: Samantha Price, ASLA

Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University

Iowa State University | Trees Forever | Iowa Department of Transportation





CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023

ITEM TITLE: WWTP Project Financial Options

DISCUSSION:

Staff would like to continue the discussion of financial options for construction regarding the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) that is currently under design.

Attached is a document prepared by Maggie Burger of Speer Financial, Inc. showing a couple of options. Staff feels we should start the process of applying for SRF funding but wants to discuss options with the Council before moving forward.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

December 4, 2023

To: Independence City Manager, Mayor and City Council
From: Maggie Burger, Sr. Vice President, Speer Financial, Inc.
Re: Sewer Project Borrowing Options

As the City plans their next sewer utility project we provide the following financing options for consideration and further discussion as the project progresses.

Option 1 -State Revolving Fund (SRF)

The SRF program is commonly used for sewer and water utility projects that replace and repair existing utility lines, plants, lagoons, mains, lift stations. The SRF is a low interest option the Iowa Finance Authorities offers communities within the State of Iowa. Some notable parameters of the SRF program are:

- Financing Options for Revenue Bonds or General Obligation Bonds and a combination of both
- Fixed interest rates for up to 20 years; 20-30 year loans can be obtained with DNR approval on an extended term worksheet that matches useful life of project. Semi-annual payments
- Interest rates set quarterly based on municipal market index, rate fixed at time of construction application. **CURRENT INTEREST RATE: 3.09%** (2.84% rate plus 0.25% annual admin)
- The program requires approximately 6-9 month lead up to construction for DNR review, approval, including environmental review.
- The program offers a 0% Planning and Design loan for the engineering costs leading up to the project bid letting.
- The program allows for reimbursement throughout the project, no interim financing needed.
- SRF funding can be supplemental to any grant awards or other cash resources.
- The coverage factor for the SRF loan is 1.10x; this means that the Net Revenues of the system must be at or more than 1.10x then the total sewer revenue debt outstanding annually.
- The SRF program does not require a debt service reserve fund.
- The SRF program requires Buy American Steel and Davis Bacon prevailing wage.

Option 2 – USDA Rural Development Loan

The USDA Rural Development may be used for water and sewer utility projects. The USDA offers a lower interest rate programming to communities within the State of Iowa. Some notable parameters of the USDA program are:

- Financing Options for Revenue Bonds only
- Fixed interest rates for 40 years with monthly payments. **CURRENT INTEREST RATE: Market Level 3.875%**
- The program requires approximately 9 months of lead time to construction for review, approval and environmental review.
- The program requires interim financing. The USDA loan will be entered into after construction is completed. The USDA program will finance the interest cost on the interim financing loan.
- The coverage factor for the USDA program is 1.10x, like the SRF program.

- The USDA does require a 10% debt service reserve fund which is built up over the first 12 months of the loan.
- The USDA program requires (Build America, Buy American) BABA

Option 3 – Municipal Bond Financing

The City can issue municipal bonds for these type of projects. All General Obligation Bonds, or SRF loans do count against the City's debt capacity. Revenue debt will not count against the City's debt capacity. Some notable parameters of municipal financing are:

- Financing Options for both revenue and general obligation bonds.
- Interest rates will fluctuate with the municipal bond market, current revenue bond rates are between 4.5%-6%. General obligation bond rates are between 4.50%-5%.
- No extra review or approval other than what is regularly required by the DNR for this project.
- Revenue bonds cannot exceed 30 years, and general obligation bonds cannot exceed 20 years.
- Bonding for these project would require at least 1.20x coverage factor and a 10% debt service reserve fund that must be funded at the time of the borrowing.

Our recommendation would be use of the SRF fund due to lower interest rates, no interim financing needs and financing the project based on the useful life of the project, approximately 20-25 years. We believe the 0% planning and design loan is useful for keeping your utility fund balances in place during the planning of the project. We also believe the SRF gives you the option of financing some, even in a small amount with a general obligation loan that can be paid with sources of revenue other than the utility system. Any of the options above likely require an increase in sewer rates which can be more accurately determined based on the financing method and estimated project cost.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Susi Lampe, IaCMC, IaCFO – City Clerk

DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023

ITEM TITLE: December 26, 2023, Council Meeting

DISCUSSION:

This is the Council meeting right after Christmas. In the past, Council Members have chosen not to hold this meeting. Any claims needing to be paid after the December 11, 2023, meeting and before the January 9, 2024, meeting, will be paid. Resolution 2015-64 allows the City Clerk to issue checks between council meetings if necessary to ensure the continued on-time payment of the City's bills.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Susi Lampe, IaCMC, IaCFO – City Clerk

DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023

ITEM TITLE: 2024 Council Meeting Dates

DISCUSSION:

I have created a list of work session and council meeting dates. This is just to make City Council and City Staff aware and to plan accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.



www.independenceia.org

Tuesday, January 2, 2024 - Work/Budget Work Session
Monday, January 8, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, January 15, 2024 - Budget Work Session
Monday, January 22, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, January 29, 2024 - Budget Work Session
Monday, February 5, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, February 12, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, February 26, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, March 4, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, March 11, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, March 25, 2024 – **Special Council Meeting at 4:45 pm– Budget hearing - property levies**
Monday, March 25, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, April 1, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, April 8, 2024– **Special Council Meeting at 4:45 pm – Budget hearing – budget in general**
Monday, April 8, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, April 22, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, May 6, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, May 13, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Tuesday, May 28, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, June 3, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, June 10, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, June 24, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, July 1, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, July 8, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, July 22, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, August 5, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, August 12, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, August 26, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Tuesday, September 3, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, September 9, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, September 23, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, October 7, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, October 14, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, October 28, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, November 4, 2024 - Work Session
Tuesday, November 12, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, November 25, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, December 2, 2024 - Work Session
Monday, December 9, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting
Monday, December 23, 2024 - Regular Council Meeting - Right before Christmas Holidays - Council can decide to not hold this meeting when it gets closer – can take formal action at the December 9th meeting.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Susi Lampe, IaCMC, IaCFO – City Clerk

DATE OF MEETING: December 4, 2023

ITEM TITLE: City Manager Annual Evaluation

DISCUSSION:

City Manager Schmitz's next review is due January 22, 2024. He will then be on an annual basis for reviews like other employees. I will have hard copies of the evaluation form for Council Members to fill out and return by 3 pm on Wednesday, January 3, 2024. Mayor will need to form a three-person committee to meet and turn in a tabulated review by Wednesday, January 17, 2024, by noon. It is anticipated that there will be a closed session to go over the tabulated review at the Monday, January 22, 2024, meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

City of Independence, Iowa Performance Evaluation

City Manager

PURPOSE

The purpose of the employee performance evaluation and development report is to increase communication between the City Council and the City Manager concerning the performance of the City Manager in the accomplishment of his/her assigned duties and responsibilities, and the establishment of specific work-related goals and objectives.

PROCESS

1. At the December Committee of the Whole meeting, each Council Member will receive an Evaluation Form to be completed by the first Wednesday in January.
2. A three-person committee appointed by the Mayor will compile and tabulate the results of the individual council member's evaluation forms. The tabulation of the individual reviews ("Tabulated Review") shall be completed by the third Wednesday in January.
3. The council, mayor and city manager will meet to review and discuss the Tabulated Review during the second City Council meeting in January.
4. After review with the City Manager as noted above, each Council Member will sign the Tabulated Review and acknowledge that he/she concur or does not concur that the Tabulated Review accurately reflects the compilation of each Council Member's review and that the review was held with the City Manager by so indicating on the Tabulated Review.
5. Following the evaluation session, the City Manager will be asked to sign the evaluation form and to circle yes that he/she concurs with the Tabulated Review or not he/she does not concur with the Tabulated Review and was given the opportunity to discuss the review with Council Members. .
6. A copy of the Tabulated Review will be placed in the City Manager's personnel file. Individual Council Member evaluations will be destroyed after formal review of the Tabulated Review with the City Manager, absent a request, during that review, by a councilperson, the Mayor, or the City Manager to review said evaluations, in which event, the reviews will not be destroyed until reviewed by said person/persons and said person has consented to their destruction.

INSTRUCTIONS

Review the employee's work performance for the entire period: try to refrain from basing judgement on recent events or isolated incidents only. Disregard your general impression of the employee and concentrate on one factor at a time.

Evaluate the employee on the basis of standards you expect to be met for the job to which assigned considering the length of time in the job. Write the number which most accurately reflects the level of performance for the factor appraised using the rating scale described below.

- 1 – Unsatisfactory: Below acceptable standards; performance is consistently deficient
- 2 – Needs Improvement: Improvement needed to meet acceptable standards; performance is inconsistent
- 3 – Meets Expectations: Meets acceptable and established standards; performance is consistent
- 4 – Exceeds Expectations: Above acceptable standards; performance usually exceeds job requirements
- 5 – Distinguished: Outstanding; unquestionably above acceptable standards; performance consistently exceeds job requirements



Performance Evaluation

Employee Name: Matthew R. Schmitz Job Title: City Manager

Department: Administration Appraisal Period: From _____ To _____

Type of Appraisal: Annual: _____ Probation: _____ (months) Other: _____ (type)

Supervisor & Title: City Council Date: _____

1 – *Unsatisfactory*: Below acceptable standards; performance is consistently deficient

2 – *Needs Improvement*: Improvement needed to meet acceptable standards; performance is inconsistent

3 – *Meets Expectations*: Meets acceptable and established standards; performance is consistent

4 – *Exceeds Expectations*: Above acceptable standards; performance usually exceeds job requirements

5 – *Distinguished*: Outstanding; unquestionably above acceptable standards; performance consistently exceeds job requirements

ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES	RATING	SUPPORTING EXAMPLES/COMMENTS
1. Supervise enforcement and execution of the city laws.		
2. Attend all meetings of the Council unless excused by the Council.		
3. Recommend to the Council such measures as may be necessary or expedient for good government and welfare of the city.		
4. Possess general supervision and direction of the administration of the city government.		
5. Directly responsible to the Council for the administration of municipal affairs as directed by that body. All city departmental administration requiring the attention of the Council shall be brought before the Council by the Manager. Council involvement in administration initiated by the Council must be coordinated through the Manager.		
6. Supervise and direct the official conduct of all officers, departments and employees of the city.		
7. Possess the power and authority to employ such assistants and other employees of the city for which the Council has approved the position generally, and to discharge said assistants or employees found incompetent or derelict in their duties. This power and authority may be delegated to subordinate officers and department heads to such extent that the Manager deems appropriate on the		

performance of the individuals filling those positions and make such recommendations with regard to their employment as seems appropriate.		
8. Supervise the performance of all contracts for work to be done for the city, supervise all purchases of material and supplies, and see that such material and supplies are received, and are of the quality and character called for by the contract.		
9. Supervise the construction, improvement, repair, maintenance and management of all city property, capital improvements, and undertakings of the city, including the making and preservation of all surveys, maps, plans, drawings, specifications, and estimates for capital improvements, except property, improvements and undertakings managed by a utility board of trustees.		
10. Cooperate with any administrative agency or utility board of trustees.		
11. Responsible for supervision of the cleaning, sprinkling, and lighting of streets, alleys, and public places, and the collection and disposal of waste.		
12. Investigate the affairs and conduct of any department, agency, officer or employee under the supervision of the Manager.		
13. Provide for and cause records to be kept of the issuance and revocation of licenses and permits authorized by city law.		
14. Advise the Council of the financial and other conditions of the city, and of its future needs.		
15. Conduct the business affairs of the city and cause accurate records to be kept by modern and efficient accounting methods.		
16. Provide the Council with periodic written itemized financial reports.		

SUCCESS FACTORS	RATING	SUPPORTING EXAMPLES/COMMENTS
1. Quality of Work-Ability to perform tasks of position with skill, competency & accuracy.		
2. Quantity of Work-Amount of work performed; utilization of time and resources available.		
3. Initiative-Ability to originate new ideas and/or methods and take on added responsibility without delegation; self-motivation.		
4. Dependability-Ability to plan, organize, and schedule assignments; carry through work to completion on schedule; and set priorities.		

5. Job Knowledge-Information concerning work duties which an individual should know for a satisfactory performance.		
6. Attendance-Coming to work daily as scheduled and conforming to work hours.		
7. Courtesy-Friendly and polite attention which an individual imparts on citizens, other employees, supervisors, and Council/Board members.		
8. Personal Appearance-Cleanliness, grooming, neatness and appropriateness of dress on the job.		

ESTABLISHMENT OF GOALS/OBJECTIVES

This evaluation helps the employee and supervisor understand more fully what is involved in doing their jobs as well as clarifying the relationship of their work to the work of others around them. This approach requires that the employee and supervisor agree to a set of goals/objectives, in order of importance, to enhance the overall performance of the employee's job.

1. Proposed Goals/Objectives to Be Completed By Next Evaluation Period.

A. _____

Timetable to complete this action: _____

B. _____

Timetable to complete this action: _____

C. _____

Timetable to complete this action: _____

D. _____

Timetable to complete this action: _____

2. What Are Your Career Objectives?

A. Short Term (1-3 Years)?

B. Long Term (beyond 3 years)?

3. How Do You Plan To Prepare Yourself To Meet Your Career Objectives?

4. What Training and Development Would Help You Improve Your Performance In Your Present Position?

5. What Could Your Supervisor Do to Help Improve Your Performance In Your Present Position?

OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING

Based upon the preceding factors, but not necessarily an average of the factors since some are more important than others, carefully read the criteria for each of the performance levels and check the term which best describes the employee's overall performance for the evaluation period. **NOTE THAT THIS OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING (AND NOT NECESSARILY THE AVERAGE OF THE SCORES ABOVE), SHALL CONSTITUTE THE FINAL SCORE. THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING OF EACH COUNCIL MEMBER SHALL THEN BE AVERAGED TO DETERMINE AN AGGREGATE SCORE. THIS AGGREGATE SCORE SHALL BE USED IN DETERMINATIONS RELATIVE TO THE CITY MANAGER'S CONTRACT.**

☐ Unsatisfactory: Below acceptable standards; performance is consistently deficient
☐ Needs Improvement: Improvement needed to meet acceptable standards; performance is inconsistent
☐ Meets Expectations ("Satisfactory" per paragraph 2 of Employee Agreement): Meets acceptable and established standards; performance is consistent
☐ Exceeds Expectations: Above acceptable standards; performance usually exceeds job requirements
☐ Distinguished: Outstanding; unquestionably above acceptable standards; performance consistently exceeds job requirements

ADDITIONAL REMARKS OR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Rated By:

(Name)

(Title)

If this is a probationary report – this employee ☐ is ☐ is not recommended for ☐ full-time ☐ part-time status.

(Name)

(Title)

(If not used as a self-evaluation form, the employee should sign below).

A copy of this Evaluation has been given to me and has been discussed with me.

(Employee's Name)

(Date)

This evaluation has been reviewed and discussed between the City Council and the City Manager on:
_____.

Council Members

Concurrence

Ward I

YES / NO

Ward II

YES / NO

Ward III

YES / NO

Ward IV

YES / NO

Ward V

YES / NO

At Large

YES/NO

At Large

YES/NO

Signature (City Manager)

Next Evaluation Date